

HEGEL, HERACLITUS AND MARX'S DIALECTIC



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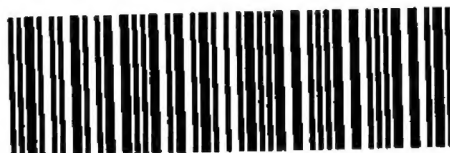
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For Peter and Anne

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Preface

The objectives of this book are threefold. The first, historical, objective is to demonstrate where the idea of dialectic enters into the work of Heraclitus, Hegel and Marx and to show what function it performs for them. The second, philosophical, objective is to provide an assessment of the worth of the use they make of dialectic and to criticize this use where necessary. The third, methodological, objective is to present and defend what I think is valuable in the dialectic and to recommend some fields in which it might profitably be employed. These objectives are, of course, closely interrelated but all three represent equally valid angles from which to approach the problem of dialectic. Those of historical bent will want to know what precisely dialectic meant for its main practitioners; those of a philosophical bent will want to know what sense we can make of the logic of dialectic; and those of a methodological bent will want to know what we can make of the dialectic in our scientific, historical and social enquiries. I hope not to have set myself too ambitious a task in trying to interest all three types of reader.

One of the main themes of this book is to demonstrate how Marx draws extensively on Heraclitus and Hegel in presenting his dialectic. The debt he owes to Hegel in particular is enormous. But this should not blind us to the fact that there is also a marked difference between Hegel's and Marx's interpretation of dialectic. This difference is that for Hegel dialectic is both a method of argument and an ontology whereas for Marx dialectic properly describes only his method of argument. This difference is of great consequence to their work. One of the main purposes of Hegel's philosophical system is to demonstrate that reality is dialectical. It might be argued that Marx's main purpose in writing *Capital* is

similar, namely, to demonstrate that the essence of human society is dialectical. However, it is my contention that Marx does not, in Hegel's fashion, see reality as dialectical but rather takes the view that reality can only be *understood* dialectically. This may seem only to be a minor distinction to make. But it has the implication that Marx does not devote his lifetime's work to demonstrating the identity of rational thought with reality but, rather, to demonstrating the lack of identity between the two. For Marx, unlike Hegel, neither is the real necessarily rational nor is the rational necessarily real. Marx, on the contrary, comes to the conclusion that the real has to be made rational and the rational real.

The first chapter turns to the originator of dialectic, the Greek pre-socratic philosopher, Heraclitus. Hegel's reception of the early Greek philosopher Heraclitus is of seminal importance in the history of philosophy. Heraclitus first introduces the dialectical view of the universe which plays such a prominent role in Hegel's philosophy and Marx's criticism of capitalist society. Hegel deals meticulously with Heraclitus's philosophy in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, and acknowledges his indebtedness to all aspects of Heraclitus's teachings. Hegel is not only greatly excited by Heraclitus's method of argument, which stressed the unity of opposites, but also shows great sympathy for Heraclitus's ontology. Like many of the pre-socratic philosophers Heraclitus believes that reality may be reduced to one principle. For Heraclitus this principle is the principle of movement or change, everything is both in a condition of coming to be and ceasing to be. This condition is symbolized for Heraclitus by fire. Hegel accepts this principle of movement in his philosophical system with his notion of becoming. He rejects the organizing concept of fire but otherwise finds a prominent place for Heraclitus's teachings in his philosophy. Marx similarly rejects the concept of fire as the universal equivalent but none the less adopts Heraclitus's principle of movement and change as an integral part of his dialectical method.

We can gain an invaluable insight into the origins and nature of Hegel's and Marx's dialectic in looking at Heraclitus's philosophy and Hegel's comments upon it. However, to discover Hegel's own view and treatment of dialectic we must turn to his *Science of Logic*. Hegel regards his *Science of Logic* as both explicating and demonstrating the truth of his dialectic. In the second chapter I

try, therefore, to give as clear an appreciation as possible of Hegel's view of logic and show how it grows from his response to Kant's dialectic. This is an extremely difficult task. Account not only has to be taken of Hegel's view of traditional, formal logic and his assessment of Kant's transcendental logic but also of his view of the relationship of logic to ordinary thought, culture and society's development in general. Because of Hegel's comprehensive view of dialectic, his *Science of Logic* is also a metaphysics or a theory of being. As well as making some criticism of this approach I try also to commend what I find stimulating and true in Hegel's method.

Chapters 3 and 4 look more closely at some of the main concepts of Hegel's dialectical logic. I attempt first of all to explain what Hegel might mean by describing the first volume of his *Logic* as an objective logic. I then outline his objections to the presentation of the 'laws of thought' usual in the logic of his day. I compare Hegel's concept of 'concrete' identity with the concept of identity of formal logic and point to the dependence of the one concept upon the other. I next deal with Hegel's astonishing treatment of the notion of contradiction and outline his case against Aristotle's law of the excluded middle. I argue that Hegel does not reject Aristotle's logic but, rather, seeks to revolutionize it by making it into a logic of both form and content.

In view of the importance of the concept of transition – both in the presentation of an argument and in the development of reality – for Hegel and Marx I look in Chapter 4 at the transition from the objective to the subjective logic in the *Science of Logic*. I suggest Hegel takes too ambitious a view of this philosophical transition. In the final section of the chapter I look in detail at Hegel's account of the syllogism. Hegel provides a complex account of the syllogism which places the various forms in a hierarchical order, leading from the more basic 'syllogism of existence' to the most sophisticated disjunctive syllogism. I discuss Hegel's view of the limitations of the syllogistic form and suggest why his analysis may have had such a profound influence on Marx. With all its limitations Hegel's *Logic* none the less outlines some of the main methodological rules of the dialectical method. Hegel's highest form of the syllogism, the syllogism of necessity, provides the model for the pattern of reasoning Marx adopts in *Capital*.

Chapter 5 looks at two vital concepts in Hegel's dialectic: the concepts of *Aufhebung* and *Vorstellung*. *Aufhebung* is of particular importance because it suggests for Hegel how a process of negation may take place without there being a solely negative outcome. Hegel wants to build upon the complex of meanings available in German for the term, ranging from 'destruction' to 'preservation', to present his positive dialectic. Whilst accepting Hegel's methodological point I reject the idealist ontological implications of his analysis. In my account of Hegel's treatment of the term *Vorstellung* I attempt to bring out the implications of Hegel's dialectic for our ordinary experience. Hegel takes the view that most ordinary thinking is trapped at the level of representation (*Vorstellung*). We look at things in a representative way not caring for those aspects of their make-up which run counter to our received view of them. This will not do for Hegel, and he recommends his dialectic as a method of subverting our ordinary taken-for-granted knowledge, and so supplanting understanding with reason. I suggest that modern theories of ideology may bear some affinity with Hegel's criticism of representational thinking.

In Chapter 6 I turn to the question of Marx's use of dialectic in *Capital*. Marx makes a number of remarks in passing about his use of dialectic in his correspondence and unpublished manuscripts, but it is only in *Capital* Marx claims to have employed in a systematic way the dialectical method. I first look closely at the important remarks that Marx makes in the afterword to the second German edition of the work to elicit from them the important distinction between the method of enquiry (*Forschungsmethode*) and the method of presentation (*Darstellungsmethode*). On the basis of this distinction I argue that Marx confines his dialectic to the method of presentation. His is not an ontological or 'materialist' dialectic. I then show how Marx seems to work with two distinct concepts of appearance in presenting his account of capitalism. I argue that these two distinct concepts of appearance are of importance to him in distinguishing his dialectic from that of Hegel. For Marx dialectic is above all a critical way of presenting our findings about nature and society. We can speak only metaphorically of dialectic 'dissolving' appearances, in reality the appearance of things alters only when circumstances are changed.

In Chapter 7 I try to illustrate how Marx employs his dialectical method of presentation of *Capital* in his discussion of the circulation of commodities. In this analysis Marx outlines the origins and role of money in the modern capitalist economy. I demonstrate how Marx calls upon several Hegelian categories such as reciprocity and the solicitation of force in presenting his analysis. I also suggest what role Hegel's account of the passive and the active and the unity of opposites may play in Marx's elucidation of his theory of money. I show how the influence of Hegel's analysis of the syllogism may be seen in the notational form which Marx adopts in explaining the role of money. I then seek to show the practical dimension implicit in Marx's view of the dialectical method.

This practical dimension arises I suggest because of the clash brought about by the critical use of dialectic between the systematic and coherent knowledge of capitalism which it affords and the actual incoherence of the system as we experience it in our everyday lives. Marx thinks that this clash between what we know and what we experience can be resolved only through transforming our circumstances. Unlike Hegel, Marx does not think rational insight is in itself sufficient for us to be at home in the world.

This view conditions Marx's treatment of the two categories I deal with in the eighth chapter, the categories of contradiction and the dialectical transition. I outline the occasions on which Marx employs the category 'contradiction' in *Capital* and try to glean from them the objections Marx might raise to Hegel's treatment of the category. For Hegel a contradiction dissolves in its ground, but for Marx what he calls a 'real contradiction' does not dissolve itself in another category. Real contradictions are, in Marx's view, resolved only by an adjustment in the circumstances of which they form part. This is not to suggest that Marx believes (as does Engels) that contradictions are a feature of nature 'in itself'. Contradictions arise only in our conscious understanding of nature and of our relationship with other individuals. Marx appears to be aware that it is only propositions which can be contradictory, and is conscious that to overcome a contradiction we experience often requires a great deal more than merely an adjustment in our thought.

This realist view of our experience colours Marx's approach to

the dialectical transition. In *Capital* he presents all the theoretical transitions with great care. He is anxious to avoid forcing his material into the pattern that best fits his conceptual scheme. Scepticism has been justifiably expressed about a number of the key transitions in Hegel's system. Marx himself raises doubts in his early writings about the transition from the absolute idea to nature at the end of the *Science of Logic*. Whilst maintaining the continuity and coherence of Hegel's dialectical presentation Marx wants to avoid the appearance of artificiality in his transitions. I suggest that Marx is more effective in the transitions he depicts in *Capital*, and then look at the thorny issues raised by his allusion to Hegel's views of the transformation of quantity and quality and the negation of the negation in key sections of the work. Whilst it does not directly represent one of the main themes of the work, I suggest that Marx's approach to dialectics is at odds with the official version of Marxian dialectic given by Engels in his later writings.

Throughout I have been concerned to draw out what is positive in both Hegel and Marx's view of dialectic. What is positive is, I suggest, the method of argument through contraries which they put forward. For any proposition to hold true presupposes that a number of contrary propositions might possibly hold true. But each of these contrary propositions have their own contrary propositions which may possibly hold true for the former to hold true – and so on. This is a point seemingly grasped most soundly in the most profoundly methodological of Plato's dialogues, the *Parmenides*. The extreme variety of approaches allowed by dialectic when dealing with a problem of comprehension may seem to open up the possibility of an infinite regress in an argument, but in reality this is the pattern that sound, systematic argument follows since the initial propositions ultimately re-appear as the contrary of later propositions (or their contraries). So the pattern followed by the dialectical unfolding of our knowledge is not one of infinite linear development but, rather, a spiral one in which the circle at its core is continually increasing its boundaries.

In the conclusion I suggest some cautious generalizations which may be made about Hegel's and Marx's dialectic. I stress that the methodological rules that may be drawn from dialectic, such as the unity of opposites and the true is the whole, have to be seen not as statements about existents but, rather, as state-

ments about how best we are to comprehend existents in terms of human social experience. Dialectic is not to be found in existent things, it represents a means of comprehending those things and, above all, our relationship to them and to other human individuals.

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1

Heraclitus's Philosophy and the Origins of Dialectic

Perhaps the most familiar source and point of origin of dialectic is the philosophy of Plato. In his dialogues Plato brought to the attention of the world both what he took to be the negative and unsatisfactory dialectic of the sophists and the positive dialectic of his teacher Socrates. Socrates looked on dialectic as the art of midwifery: as the process of giving birth to new insights through analysing and criticizing the thoughts of others. Plato saw himself as practising this art in his own dialogues. In the best known of his works, the *Republic*, we can, for instance, see him developing his own theory of the state from the criticism voiced by Socrates's partners in the dialogue. Plato employs the same means as the sophists in defeating the arguments of his opponents, but then goes on to advance his own point of view on the basis of the conclusions that are drawn. Plato shows himself to be thoroughly dissatisfied with the sophists' role of refutation for its own sake. He practises the art of dialectic most successfully producing powerful and well-founded conclusions from engaging and sometimes entertaining dialogues. In one of his most abstract dialogues, the *Parmenides*, Plato produces an account of his dialectical procedure which stresses the attainability, yet apparent relativity, of knowledge. This dialectic had the most profound effect upon Hegel.¹

However, Plato is not the most radical dialectician of ancient times. The thinker who employed dialectic in the most far-reaching way and provided the inspiration for Plato's own dialectic was Heraclitus. The path followed by Heraclitus also set a model for both Hegel and Marx. Both testify to the crucial significance of Heraclitus's work for the development of their dialectic. Heraclitus stood outside his own society and was

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wholly sceptical of ordinary opinion. He would not yield anything to the status quo, insisting on being his own judge on matters of knowledge and morality. Heraclitus was prepared to reject any external authority not founded on reason and good sense. Yet despite the distance he maintained between himself and the ordinary concerns of individuals Heraclitus none the less showed himself to be deeply interested in the fate of mankind.

Heraclitus is an extraordinary figure in Greek history and the history of philosophy. None of his writings survive in their original completed form. In his own lifetime he seems to have cut himself off deliberately from other individuals and society, living a simple and austere life in the mountains around his home city of Ephesus. Among the Ancients he was known as Heraclitus 'the obscure' and, if we are to judge by his surviving fragments, this is a wholly apt and deserved reputation. He was thought to be fond of riddles, and many of his views are expressed in pithy, pungent and witty aphorisms preserved for us by later philosophers and biographers, such as Aristotle and Plutarch. Heraclitus is said to have been in his prime as a philosopher in the 69th Olympiad or 504–501 BC²

Very little that is certain is known of Heraclitus's life. He seems to have been of aristocratic birth and to have shunned public office in his own city. In one of his surviving fragments he speaks with contempt of his fellow citizens of Ephesus, saying that what they 'deserve is to be hanged to the last man' for having expelled from the city their most honourable and capable fellow citizen Hermodorus.³ Heraclitus has little respect for the judgement of the ordinary individual and suggests that little is lost by standing to one side of the preoccupations and concerns of everyday life. But his detached attitude should not be mistaken for a lack of concern with the course of human life and society. Heraclitus's surviving fragments suggest he has a consuming interest in the vagaries of nature and society.

Heraclitus has a deserved reputation for obliqueness and opacity which should not prevent us from reading his work sympathetically. He is, in my view, a most penetrating and profound thinker, and I think little credence should be given to W. K. C. Guthrie's suggestions in the first volume of his *History of Greek Philosophy* that Heraclitus is purposely obscure because of the contempt in which he holds the rest of mankind. Guthrie

acknowledges that for Heraclitus 'the truth is something that is there for all men to grasp', but draws the false conclusion that Heraclitus thought 'most men are too stupid to see it'.⁴ There is nothing in Heraclitus's fragments to suggest that he thought men universally stupid or that he did not want, as Guthrie puts it, 'to demean himself by using language that fools can understand'.⁵ The meaning of his sayings is often crystal clear and where difficulties of interpretation arise, they arise not from Heraclitus's supposed intellectual arrogance but from the difficulty and the complexity of the problems concerned. Heraclitus thought the truth was difficult to get at even though it was accessible to all. The preoccupations of the ordinary individual often make it difficult to see things clearly.

In discussing Heraclitus's mode of expression it should, above all, be remembered that he was contributing to a philosophical and cultural tradition which was still primarily oral.⁶ Although he is said to have deposited his book in the temple of Artemis at Ephesus the principal method for disseminating his thoughts and preserving them for posterity was still by word of mouth. Thus the pithy, pointed form of expression was essential for the preservation of his ideas, a form which Heraclitus found appropriate both to convey his ideas and to ensure they were retained. It is of course in retrospect fortunate that Heraclitus collected his thoughts in this way, or else all record of his ideas might now be lost as what we know of his thinking is for the most part based on quotations from memory by later classical authors.

In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* Hegel identifies completely with the philosophy of Heraclitus. He sees in Heraclitus a kindred spirit who recognizes the true worth of dialectical thinking. The conclusion he comes to, having studied Heraclitus's philosophy is: 'We can in fact say of Heraclitus what Socrates said. What remains to us of Heraclitus is excellent, and we may conjecture of what is lost, that it was as excellent.'⁷ Hegel suggests that the significance of Heraclitus's philosophy for the development of his own dialectical method can be shown by means of this general scheme. Hegel suggests dialectic is, first, an external dialectic, reasoning back and forth without getting to the heart of the matter; secondly, it is the 'immanent dialectic' of the object, but falling within the subject's observation; thirdly, it

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is the 'objectivity of Heraclitus' which grasps the dialectic itself as a principle.⁸

What leads Hegel to attribute to Heraclitus dialectic in its mature form? What, in Hegel's view, raises Heraclitus's thinking to the highest point of human reason is that, unlike his critics the Eleatic philosophers Melissus, Parmenides and Zeno, who see true reality as Being (*Sein*) only, Heraclitus sees true reality as Becoming (*Werden*). Hegel thinks that the Eleatics go beyond an external dialectic which merely stresses the relativity of all opinions to an immanent or objective dialectic 'in which the object is taken for itself, without previous hypothesis, idea or obligation, not under any outward conditions, laws or causes'.⁹ However this dialectic remains negative in that the Eleatics prime objective was to refute the views of their opponents and ordinary men. Thus although Hegel would no doubt agree with Parmenides's advice: 'You shall inquire into everything both the motionless heart of well-rounded truth, and also the opinions of mortals, in which there is not true reliability. But nevertheless you should learn these things (opinions) also – the opinion that what seems must certainly exist, being indeed everything,'¹⁰ he does not agree with stopping simply with the errors of common sense. He thinks the more difficult task, and the most important one, the one of moving on from the refutation of opinion to demonstrating what is true. Truth for Hegel can never be a mere assertion as we find, for instance, with Parmenides when he says that the One 'is, and it is not possible for it not to be'.¹¹ It has rather to be a fully developed process of reasoning in which the reality of one point of view is shown from the refutation of an earlier point of view. This, Hegel thinks, we find in Heraclitus. Heraclitus recognizes the diversity of opinion, view and thought in human society but shows from this diversity that certain ideas hold true.

There are very few aspects of Heraclitus's metaphysics, therefore, with which Hegel does not agree. He says in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*: 'Here we see land; there is no proposition of Heraclitus which I have not adopted in my Logic'.¹² There is no other philosopher who gains Hegel's whole-hearted approval in the same way as Heraclitus. This approbation for Heraclitus's philosophy as a whole is ever more surprising in the light of the negligible interest that Hegel shows in the cosmology of Heraclitus's contemporary philosophers. It is the methods of argu-

ment of the Eleatics that interests Hegel, not their cosmologies. But Heraclitus is different since he makes movement and change the theme of his thinking. This is in complete contrast to Parmenides and Zeno who seek energetically to deny the reality of motion and change.

Hegel thinks Zeno's attempts to deny the reality of motion fully worthy of our attention. They are an example of an immanent, if simply negative dialectic. Hegel thinks it can be compared favourably with that of Kant. Zeno, as does Kant, makes great play with the subjective and incomplete nature of appearance, but Hegel thinks Zeno shows greater merit in his dialectic than Kant in his in that he uses his dialectic to come to a positive conclusion about appearance.¹³ Whereas Kant rules that our knowledge is deficient because we cannot properly be said to know what lies behind appearance, Zeno comes to the conclusion that there is an unchanging reality behind appearance which only our knowledge can affirm. As with Parmenides, what can be said unfailingly about the reality behind appearance is that only the one is.

Zeno's denial of the reality of motion derives from his monism. He advances four famous arguments to prove the point. Hegel deals with each of these arguments in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* which have become known, respectively, as the argument of the 'dichotomy', the 'Achilles' argument, the argument of the 'arrow' and the argument of the 'stadium'. In the dichotomy argument Zeno suggests that motion is not real since any object which travels over a certain distance must first pass through the halfway point. But within any given distance, say, from A to B, there are an infinite number of possible halfway points. Even the minutest distance can be divided to yield another notional halfway point. Thus, in order for a body to pass through all these halfway points entails that it would never complete its journey. The Achilles argument rests on a similar paradox. Here it is argued that in a race a slower runner will never be overtaken by the quicker (as with Achilles and the tortoise) because the pursuer must first reach the point from which the slower runner begins, in the meanwhile the runner being pursued will always have moved ahead. The race is not seen by Zeno as a continuous one, the competition always beginning afresh with Achilles in pursuit. In the argument of the arrow Zeno takes

a different tack in suggesting that a moving body such as an arrow must at any stage in its flight be somewhere in particular, occupying a space which is at least as large as itself. However, if the arrow is always somewhere in particular it cannot be in motion. The final argument concerning the stadium is somewhat more complex. It deals with a number of bodies moving at the same speed in opposite directions within the same stadium. Here Zeno thinks he can prove that half a given amount of time can be shown equal to its double if we persist in holding the view that bodies can be shown to move.¹⁴

Although much impressed by the dialectical skills Zeno exhibits Hegel does not fully accept the conclusions Zeno draws from the paradoxes of motion. To Zeno's contention in the arrow argument that nothing moves as no object can both be in a place and not in a place at one time, Hegel makes the telling reply that for a body to be in motion precisely 'means to be in this place and not to be in it.'¹⁵ Hegel is fully prepared to accept that there is much in the phenomenon of motion that is paradoxical, however the phenomenon should not for this reason be regarded as null and void. Contrary to the view advanced by Zeno the paradoxes of motion have to be accepted as real and properly explained. Here Hegel's and Zeno's ontologies clash. Hegel has room for development and change within his ontology which Zeno's monism rules out. But Zeno sets about his task in a manner of which Hegel greatly approves. Zeno demonstrates how space and time are both infinitely divisible, and if a supposedly moving object is regarded as coming to rest, as in the dichotomy argument, at all these notional points of division it would never complete its journey. Indeed an object could never undertake such a journey since the requirement that it constantly comes to rest at points of division would leave it constantly at rest. Hegel does not deny that this is true. But he suggests that greater imagination is required to portray motion properly. A moving object should not simply be conceptualized as moving away from that point. A body in motion is, for Hegel, a telling example of a contradictory phenomenon which can be explained only dialectically. For Marx capitalism is a social system which is continually involved in a process of movement and change, thus he also draws on the ancient Greek philosophers' dialectical understanding of motion.

In contrast with Zeno, Heraclitus stresses the reality of movement and change. Hegel attributes to him the view that 'being and nothing are one and the same, everything is and yet is not'.¹⁶ As with every other saying attributed to Heraclitus there is some difficulty in establishing the authenticity of this aphorism. Hegel takes as his authority Aristotle who attributes to Heraclitus a similar view when he says in the *Metaphysics* 'that it is impossible for any one to believe the same thing to be and not to be, as some think Heraclitus says; for what a man says he does not necessarily believe'.¹⁷ To further support his view of Heraclitus as one who sees reality as becoming Hegel also quotes from Aristotle the suggestion 'the doctrine of Heraclitus, that all things are and are not, seems to make everything true'.¹⁸ Hegel, however, does not share Aristotle's scepticism about Heraclitus's conclusions. Hegel is prepared to go along with Heraclitus in thinking that things both are and are not, and propounds a very similar doctrine in the *Science of Logic* where he argues that finite things both are and cease to be:

When we say of things that they are finite, we understand thereby that they not only have a determinateness, that their quality is not only a reality and an intrinsic determination, that finite things are not merely limited . . . but that on the contrary, non-being constitutes their nature and being. Finite things are, but their relation to themselves is that they are negatively self-related and this very relation drives them beyond their being. They are, but the truth of this being is their destruction. The finite not only alters, as anything does, but it ceases to be, and it is not merely a possibility that it ceases to be, as though it could be that it might not cease. No, the nature of the being of finite things is that they have within them the seeds of their own destruction; the hour of their birth is the hour of their death.¹⁹

Much as I believe that this doctrine makes sense from a developmental point of view, namely, that over time things alter to such an extent that they cease to be what they were previously, I think that Hegel (and Heraclitus – if this is his view) have a problem in defending their view as an account of things as they are observed in a representative way. An account of an object which seeks to be representative will attempt to isolate those characteristics which are on average found to inhere in the object. Such a static, observational account finds little room for attributing an object with opposed characteristics. But this is precisely

what Hegel and Heraclitus try to do with their ontology, they try to show that things both are and are not as they seem.

Thus the objections that Aristotle raises to Heraclitus's views are serious and fundamental. Aristotle devotes a great deal of attention in his logic to demonstrating that you cannot predicate the same thing with opposing qualities, or, as he puts it in the *Metaphysics*, 'that the same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject in the same respect'.²⁰ What lies at the heart of the dispute between Aristotle and Heraclitus is Aristotle's insistence upon dealing with the attributes that inhere in a thing at the 'same time'. Hegel and Heraclitus are making a general proposition about the nature of things *over time*, Aristotle wants to confine the discussion to the properties of a thing at a distinct point in time. Given their different perspectives we have to conclude that both parties are correct. Hegel and Heraclitus would acknowledge the truth of Aristotle's suggestion from a static point of view. Aristotle, equally, would have to admit that any widening of perspective with respect to time, place or nature of the percipient might alter the nature of the report given about the characteristic of a thing, and possibly lead to opposed characteristics being attributed to it. This is why the dialectical approach is of such great value to Marx in that it looks at things over time.

For instance, there is no doubt that for the average citizen a prison is a place of confinement and loss of freedom, however, there exists a class of unfortunate individuals, those incurable recidivists, for whom (we are told) it is a place of refuge and companionship. Here we do not have an example of opposed characteristics inhering in the same institution, but the characteristics attributed to the institution are so radically different that we get an inkling of the point that Hegel and Heraclitus have in mind. A convinced Aristotelian might seek to circumvent the point by arguing that the radically different characteristics are not attributed to prison by the same individual, but it would be churlish not to concede the point that things can, from different points of view, and at different times, appear to have opposed characteristics. Heraclitus's suggestion seems to be that we regard things in a fluid way, alive always to the possibility that their properties may alter and, indeed, become the opposite of what they are at present. In contrast to this view Aristotle's continual

refining of the thing observed and the standpoint of the observer appears somewhat formalistic and dogmatic. It is doubtful that Aristotle establishes in a fully satisfactory way why 'of one subject we must either affirm or deny any one predicate'.²¹ For some purposes of scientific observation and classification the approach Aristotle suggests in his *Metaphysics* may be useful, but for purposes of synthesis and explanation Heraclitus's more developmental perspective is more satisfactory. Aristotle's approach would make Marx's and Engels's account of capitalism difficult to sustain. Marx and Engels see capitalism as being both thoroughly flawed yet thoroughly progressive. They are able to attribute to the society such opposed characteristics because they see it from the contrasting perspectives of the feudal past and the hoped-for socialist future.

Both Aristotle and Heraclitus see philosophy as being about what is ultimately real, however, they see ultimate reality in different ways. Aristotle concentrates on substance as the ultimate form of being and in its attributes we discover the nature of things. Heraclitus, on the other hand, regards thought or the *logos* as the ultimate form of being. For Aristotle the deepest reality is unchangeable – the unmoved moved, for Heraclitus the deepest reality is eternal flux, symbolized by the simultaneously destructive and creative power of fire. The different approaches to metaphysics of Aristotle and Heraclitus are reflected in the different approaches to logic. Aristotle's philosophy betrays a deep interest in the analysis of our experience. His philosophy deals with a vast range of topics: from zoology, botany and astronomy to the study of politics and ethics. In his treatment of these topics Aristotle is always categorizing and defining. Heraclitus in contrast shows less interest in categorization and defining the variety of our experience and much more in trying to discover its underlying unity. Therefore, in political philosophy, whereas there is no doubt that Aristotle's method would be the better one for us to adopt to distinguish the various types of constitution, assuming that there are clear marks of demarcation among constitutions, Heraclitus's dialectical method would be the better one for us to employ to account for a change from one form of constitution to the next. Heraclitus's method would serve best to explain the change because his approach would not suppose that the various types of constitution were wholly

distinct from one another, i.e. that the constitution of a society could both be one thing and another. This may perhaps help to explain the superiority of Plato's account of the various types of constitution in the *Republic* over Aristotle's account in *The Politics*. Plato was a far more enthusiastic advocate of dialectic than Aristotle, and in the *Republic* we see a fluid account of the various forms of constitution not only delineating their differences, but also demonstrating how the one constitution of its own nature tends to another: timarchy to oligarchy, oligarchy to democracy and democracy to tyranny. It seems that Plato, unlike Aristotle, was prepared to accept Heraclitus's point, that of one subject we can both affirm and deny the one predicate. It is, of course, the Heraclitean and Platonic view of change that Hegel and Marx are most at home with. In so far as they take a view of ultimate reality they see it as one of a process of fluid change.

The doctrine of flux

There is some controversy amongst specialists as to whether or not the views Heraclitus expresses about change being perpetual are central to his philosophy. In an article first published in *Mind* entitled 'Natural Change in Heraclitus', G. S. Kirk claims that 'the constancy of change is not an idea Heraclitus particularly stressed'.²² It need hardly be said that this view is not in keeping with Hegel's interpretation of Heraclitus. Kirk regards Plato as being responsible for linking Heraclitus's philosophy with the idea of flux by making the suggestion in *Cratylus* 402a that Heraclitus took the view 'that everything is moving and nothing stays still, and likening things to the flow of a river he says you could not step twice into the same river'.²³ Kirk suggests that there can be some doubt as to whether Plato's memory served him correctly here. Not surprisingly, Hegel is prepared to accept Plato's testimony on this matter and in this he has the support of W. K. C. Guthrie, author of the comprehensive and scholarly *Cambridge History of Greek Philosophy* who says that the river quotation is 'first and correctly given by Plato'.²⁴ Guthrie suggests that the balance of scholarly evidence is very much against Kirk's view and in favour of the view that the doctrine of flux forms an essential part of Heraclitus's thinking.

Another classical scholar to take a similar view to Hegel on this question is C. H. Kahn. In his recent re-translation and re-editing of Heraclitus's work he also testifies to the authenticity of the river-statement, but this time as reported by Plutarch, a Platonist philosopher of the later first century BC. The statement, as quoted by Plutarch and translated by Kahn is:

One cannot step twice into the same river, nor can one grasp any mortal substance in a stable condition, but it scatters and again gathers; it forms and dissolves, and approaches and departs.²⁵

To this Kahn adds the further fragment:

As they step into the same rivers, others and still other waters flow upon them.²⁶

For Hegel these statements represent the most profound ontology. He fully agrees that no aspect of the natural or social world should, as these fragments imply, be taken as fixed or static. Reality is a continual process of change in any aspect of which each individual is but momentarily caught up. In trying to depict reality accurately we set ourselves a highly elusive goal which requires a continually critical and open-ended approach. An analytical approach which sets out from definitions and seeks certainties can never be fully adequate to the task. The impact of these views on Marx is also unmistakeable. In the account he gives of capital definitions play only a preliminary role. The meaning of a concept is continually widened with Marx as we learn more of the reality it is intended to convey.

The unity of opposites

Given this view, Marx would agree with Hegel that Heraclitus's philosophy is still relevant today. This philosophy, Hegel says, 'is not one past and gone; its principle is essential'.²⁷ The essential principle which Heraclitus establishes is, in Hegel's view, that 'the truth is only as the unity of opposites'.²⁸ The idea of the unity of opposites, although much overworked by some Marxist commentators, takes us to the heart of Hegel's and Marx's dialectic. For both Hegel and Marx this idea is no mere formula which is applied to any problem of comprehension and rational explanation, it is a summary of his experience of the nature of knowledge

and reality. Marx would quarrel only with Hegel's desire, albeit after a serious and thorough study of natural science and philosophy, to regard the principle of the unity of opposites as an ontological, as well as, epistemological principle. There is a great deal of difference between the assertion that the principle is a useful one to have in mind in seeking to understand any phenomenon, and the assertion which Hegel makes that all things or phenomena are a unity of opposites. This second move is illegitimate, since we cannot legislate in advance about the nature and kind of new knowledge we may acquire: otherwise it would not be new knowledge.²⁹

None the less, although there is room for scepticism about the applicability of the unity of opposites as an ontological principle, there is a great deal to be said for it as a methodological principle, namely, one we entertain as a hypothesis about any object we intend to investigate. As we shall see, this is the sense in which Marx adopts the principle. Heraclitus, as Hegel suggests, contributes a great deal to the development of this heuristic principle. This is a view which is corroborated by Kahn who says in his Introduction to his recent translation of Heraclitus's fragments that 'the characteristic achievement of Heraclitus lies in his articulating a view within which the opposites can be seen together as a unity.'³⁰ And it is interesting to note that Kirk, who is less convinced of the dialectical side of Heraclitus's thinking, also testifies that what Heraclitus stressed 'above all else was his discovery of the unity that subsists in apparent opposites.'³¹

Hegel sees the idea of the unity of opposites as providing the theme of those intriguing paradoxes which Heraclitus brings to light in his many aphorisms. Some of these aphorisms appear at first sight to be mere platitudes, as when Heraclitus says 'the way up and the way down is one and the same';³² however I think that commentators like Hegel and Kahn are right to look for a deeper meaning in these apparently straightforward statements. Heraclitus here, for instance, is not merely pointing to the fact that we can normally go up and down an incline along the same path, but is, rather, trying to bring out the necessary relativity of many of our usual claims about the world. What we perceive merely as an upward path may well be perceived by another person descending as merely a downward path, just as what we perceive as deterioration in social conditions might be perceived by another

as an improvement. This contrast is essential to Marx's critique of capitalist society. He regards what is normally seen as a deterioration in conditions, i.e., the heightening of class struggle, as a sign of an impending improvement in social conditions. Thus, there is much to be said for looking beyond the literal truth of Heraclitus's statements to their implications about our understanding of the world. This aphorism seems to bring out that in attributing a particular property or characteristic to something we ought also to be alive to the possibility that some element of the opposite of that characteristic or property might also be attributable to it from a different point of view.

Heraclitus appears to broaden the idea of the unity of opposites into a view of life and the cosmos as a whole. This is a path Hegel follows. Another of the sayings attributed to Heraclitus by Kahn is that the 'path of the carding-wheel is straight and crooked'.³³ An alternative, and more illuminating rendering of this fragment is given by Guthrie who suggests this fragment be read as 'the track of writing is straight and crooked'.³⁴ Whichever of the two renderings is preferred the deeper significance of the saying appears to be that the execution of a straightforward task may often involve a seemingly indirect and roundabout method. Kahn suggests that the fragment may have an even more allusive meaning in line with Heraclitus's metaphysics as a whole: 'At the most allusive level', he says, 'this brief text can be understood as a comment on the order of nature and the course of human life. Irrational, cruel and needlessly destructive as it often appears, this "twisted" course of events is plotted according to a wise pattern'.³⁵ This view has its echo in what Hegel has to say about the 'cunning of reason' in his *Philosophy of History*.

Another similar saying attributed to Heraclitus is: 'Cold warms up, warm cools off, moist parches, dry dampens'.³⁶ This saying appears to illustrate Heraclitus's view that the unity of opposites is just as much a feature of nature as we observe it as it is a feature of human life. Heraclitus seems to suggest in his fragments that no description of the natural world can hold true always and absolutely. The natural world is subject to continued change in which opposites pass from one to another: winter becomes summer, day passes into night, heat into cold and calm into storm. We have to be aware of the relativity of all our descriptions of natural conditions: at best a description will hold true for only a

short period of time. Our descriptions of nature are not only partial and limited in this sense though, they are also limited by the standpoint of the observer. With this fragment Heraclitus brings out the point that we attribute properties to something usually from an anthropocentric point of view: 'The sea is the purest and foulest water: for fish drinkable and life-sustaining; for men undrinkable and deadly'.³⁷ Another fragment which may be linked with this one is, as Kahn suggests, Heraclitus's suggestion that 'Asses prefer garbage to gold'.³⁸ These fragments point, once again, to the relative and almost arbitrary nature of our usual classification of things. Our values and sentiments cannot but effect our perception and understanding of things, and this point is brought home no more aptly than by the inter-species comparisons Heraclitus suggests.

In his gloss on these fragments Kahn suggests that these ideas were later seized upon by the sceptics to show why it is necessary always to suspend judgement on the perceptions and observation of our senses. Sceptics such as Sextus Empiricus exploited these fragments of Heraclitus to suggest that we can know only how things appear to our senses, not as they actually are.³⁹ But it is doubtful that Heraclitus's intention is simply to cast doubt on the possibility of our knowing the external world. His is a positive dialectic. Others of his fragments suggest that he thinks it possible for us to enjoy a clear comprehension of the world.⁴⁰ In the first and longest fragment he speaks, for instance, of his account of the universe holding 'forever' even though 'men ever fail to comprehend',⁴¹ and in a subsequent fragment he claims, more positively, that 'the account is shared and accessible to all, although most choose to ignore it'.⁴²

Knowledge and the world

Thus for Heraclitus knowledge is possible, but it requires we question many of our usual assumptions. Heraclitus is highly contemptuous of the untutored views of the ordinary individual. The ordinary individual is not incapable of achieving an insight into the nature of things, rather he chooses to overlook and ignore what insight he gains.⁴³ Above all, what the attainment of knowledge requires is that we are always conscious of the

opposed and reciprocal nature of the relations between things. Here Hegel and Marx would concur. The attributes or properties of a thing attain their significance through the relation of those attributes or properties to the attributes or properties of the thing to which they are opposed. This is, I think, brought out in the aphorism:

It is not better for human beings to get all they want. It is disease that has made health sweet and good, hunger satiety, weariness rest.⁴⁴

Health, hunger and weariness attain their significance through the contrast with their opposites, disease, satiety and rest. The ingredients of the good life are as easily described in terms of what is to be avoided as they are in terms of what is to be actively sought. The goals of ethical and political life are chosen in a similar way. Justice and right can be actively sought in society only when their opposites injustice and wrong are properly recognized and understood. Knowledge of what is right and what is wrong presuppose each other, they are opposites which bear an essential and reciprocal relation to each other. Marx, for instance, is fully aware that to overcome the 'evils' of capitalist society first requires that we recognize them as evils.

In an astute comment upon the fragment describing the sea as 'the purest and foulest water: for fish drinkable and life-sustaining; for men undrinkable and deadly'⁴⁵ Kahn suggests how best to interpret Heraclitus's continual linking of opposites. Here, Kahn says, 'the trivial reading of Heraclitus's doctrine . . . is that there is no accounting for tastes. The fallacious reading is that because one man's meat is another man's poison, there is no difference between meat and poison. The confused reading is that all things are inherently contradictory. If we wish to ascribe an intelligent doctrine to Heraclitus . . . these texts provide the basis for a valid generalization: in an opposed pair the negative term, as defined by human needs and desires, is never wholly negative.'⁴⁶ As Kahn suggests, Heraclitus is not a universal relativist who thinks that the significance and truth of a matter depend wholly on the standpoint of the observer, nor equally, is Heraclitus a thoroughgoing sceptic who thinks that nothing in our experience is certain because of the fleeting, transient and conflicting nature of our perception of things. In pointing to the apparent contradictions in our observation and evaluation of the

world Heraclitus appears to want to draw our attention to an important methodological point. This methodological point is, as Kahn says, that there is generally a positive side to any negative human evaluation of a quality, circumstance and condition. We may, for instance, prefer an altruistic companion to a selfish one, but in so far as selfishness implies a high level of self-esteem, and altruism a low level of self-esteem, there are possibly some circumstances where we might prefer the selfish person as a companion. An ungovernable society might also be one we might not best like to live in, however, where the ungovernability is attributable to an extensive and effective employment of democratic practices we might in the end find the ungovernability of the society acceptable. Nothing in individual and social existence can be taken as unconditionally good or bad. In keeping with this Heraclitean precept, Marx's favourite saying was, apparently, that 'nothing human is foreign to me'. There is always a great deal more to be said than can be contained in one individual judgement. We gain knowledge and understanding in recognizing the two-edged and conflicting character of the significant properties we attribute to objects, circumstances and events.

Hegel says, therefore, of Heraclitus that he has a 'beautiful, natural, childlike manner of speaking the truth of the truth'.⁴⁷ Those concepts which lie at the root of Hegel's own philosophy like the unity of subject and object, the ever-present nature of mind or spirit, and the unity of experience emerge, he suggests, for the first time in Heraclitus's philosophy. Kahn in his commentary on Heraclitus's fragments suggests that Hegel is indebted to Heraclitus in one other respect, namely, for his interpretation of the principle of negativity. As Kahn says:

It is this positive interpretation of the principle of negativity that has made Heraclitus so congenial to Hegel and his followers. For there is something like an anticipation of Hegelian dialectic in Heraclitus's treatment of opposites. . . . The dialectic of opposites is focussed on the partiality of the human perspective. . . . It is not that we are (for example) mistaken in preferring sweet drinking water and clean baths, any more than we are wrong to prefer health to sickness and satiety to hunger. But the doctrine of opposites is, among other things, an attempt to attain a larger vision by recognizing the life-enhancing function of the negative term, and hence of comprehending the positive value of the antithesis itself.⁴⁸

In describing the dialectical nature of reason in the Preface to the

first edition of the *Science of Logic* Hegel stresses its negative nature. Reason undermines and destroys the 'determinations of the understanding' but, importantly, it does not stay 'in the nothing of this result but in the result is no less positive.'⁴⁹ Hegel then connects this procedure with what he regards as the correct philosophical method which builds a systematic and coherent account of experience from the most thoroughgoing scepticism. In keeping with this view, Hegel's own point of departure in presenting his philosophical system is his radical criticism of previous philosophy, just as later Marx's point of departure in his account of capitalism was a radical criticism of classical political economy.

Heraclitus's dialectic is not, of course, restricted to our knowledge and understanding of the world. It also has an ethical dimension. His dialectic leads him for example to suggest that 'It is not better for human beings to get all that they want. It is disease that makes health sweet and good, hunger satiety, weariness rest'.⁵⁰ In satisfying all his desires an individual is left with little to strive for, and often the striving is as fulfilling as the attainment of the goal itself. Heraclitus seems to be cautioning against both too high an expectation and too low an expectation of success. Too high an expectation leads to disappointment, too low an expectation leads to a feeling of lassitude and despondency. He seems to suggest that we recognize and acknowledge the ebb and flow of life and the contrasts which this entails. There is no joy without sadness, no good fortune without ill-luck, no peace without conflict and no success without failure. Hegel is, as we shall see, able to find good use for this ethical dialectic.

The same doctrine of the complementarity of opposites is applied by Heraclitus to politics and law. As Kahn suggests in his commentary, the thought that lies behind the cryptic fragment: 'If it were not for these things, they would not have known the name of justice' appears to be 'the conceptual dependence of justice upon the existence of injustice and legal disputes'.⁵¹ We learn to value rules and institutions best as we learn to value other human beings: through their absence. The benefits afforded by justice are best appreciated in an unjust and tyrannical society; equally, the benefits of peace are no more apparent than when a state is at war. We can envisage Marx echoing this point in his criticism of the capitalism system, it is in contrast with the



drawbacks of capitalism that the advantages of socialism are best seen.

These opposites are complementary in the sense that one is no more dispensable than the other. The possibility of injustice is as indispensable to the possibility of justice as the possibility of war is as indispensable to peace. Indeed perhaps the most famous of Heraclitus's aphorisms is:

War is the father of all and king of all; and some he has shown as gods, others men; some he has made slaves, others free.⁵²

War for Heraclitus is not only indispensable for peace it is indispensable for all life and development. Conflict and struggle are, he suggests, at the root of culture and civilization. This is a discomforting thought for many of a liberal or pacifist disposition, but it is mistaken to suggest, as Popper does, that Heraclitus shows moral approval for the conflict-ridden course of human life and society.⁵³ The tone of Heraclitus's fragments about human society is not one of moral approval or disapproval, rather it is that of the dispassionate observer of both success and tragedy. Hegel and Marx adopt a similar tone in their historical writings, believing that history and morality were not always and of necessity in accord. This point comes out in two more of Heraclitus's fragments which, following Kahn, may be linked with the aphorism on war as the 'father of all':

Homer was wrong when he said 'Would that conflict might vanish from among gods and men!' (Iliad XVIII. 107) For there would be no attunement without high and low notes nor any animals without male and female, both of which are opposites.⁵⁴

One must realize that war is shared and conflict is Justice, and that all things come to pass (and are ordained?) in accordance with conflict.⁵⁵

The three fragments taken together shed a great deal of light on Heraclitus's thinking about man and society. What he appears here to have in view is the seemingly arbitrary and violent way in which any kind of settled justice and law has been brought into being. This can be said not only of the Greek city-states with which Heraclitus was familiar but also of the modern European states. There have been very few boundaries drawn in Europe without the use or the threat of the use of force. And how many of the new states that have entered the United Nations since 1945



were able to establish their sovereignty without threat of force and violence? Settled justice and law were established in these states, as they were in the modern European states, by coercive means. But these coercive means do not obviate the need to respect justice and law where they exist. Heraclitus has no wish to conclude that settled law and justice are undesirable. Indeed, from others of his fragments it appears that Heraclitus, like Hegel, held the law in high respect. He is reported as saying, for instance, that 'the people must fight for the law as for their city wall'.⁵⁶ To be aware, as Heraclitus is, that in first establishing a legal system, and in later enforcing it, a number of contingent and painful things may occur – some may be rendered dependent, others may be rendered masters and kings – does not, in his view, detract from the necessity and requirement that it takes place. Although law is the product of conflict and stress it should, none the less, be respected. It is in this vein I think that Heraclitus suggests that 'it is law also to obey the counsel of one'.⁵⁷ Unlike Popper I do not think that Heraclitus is recommending a conservative and anti-democratic form of rule here,⁵⁸ Heraclitus is suggesting merely that a system of rule is not only established in the first instance through conflict, but its maintenance may also involve conflict and abnormal forms of rule.

Far from thinking the drift of Heraclitus's argument here being undemocratic and conservative I think that it is equally open to a radical interpretation. In suggesting that justice and law originate in conflict and are the continual product of conflict, Heraclitus implies that future and more desirable legal forms are most effectively won through engaging in debate and conflict. This is a line of argument that Marx follows. Heraclitus acknowledges that laws are altered and prevailing social practices are changed by struggle and opposition. There may be something conservative, I grant, however, in Heraclitus's conclusion that this insight into social forces underlying law should not prevent us from obeying the law as it is in force at the time, especially in so far as the existing law may not allow radical political opposition. Hegel would, of course, fall in with this view. But the defence of the rule of law is not something that conservatives can claim as an exclusive characteristic of their thinking.

Heraclitus's suggestion that 'conflict is justice'⁵⁹ seems at first sight a most puzzling example of his use of the idea of the unity of

opposites which it would be foolish to interpret merely in terms of present political doctrines. Heraclitus appears to think that conflict should not be thought of as an aberrant feature of society but should rather be seen as a normal and integral feature of human life, in a sense vital to the persistence and health of a society. A fully stable society without divisions and antagonism is, Heraclitus implies, one that is tending towards ill-health and injustice. Competition and antagonism between individuals and factions is a sign of the need for justice, balance and equity among groups. Where there is no longer need for balance and equity among groups and individuals justice has already died. But is not Heraclitus here pointing at the dynamic nature of any society in which no rules and institutions can be taken as entirely fixed and fast, and in which the pattern is not set by what is commonly agreed but rather what is controversial and under dispute? Without doubt for Heraclitus conflict is not only part of society, it is its vital element. Here, of course, Marx and Engels with their doctrine of class struggle would concur.

One saying which is attributed by Theophrastus, a pupil of Aristotle, to Heraclitus: 'The fairest order in the world is a heap of random sweepings'⁶⁰ brings out well the connection which Heraclitus sees between contingency and order. The main thrust of Heraclitus's argument here is no doubt cosmological, not social, yet I think his argument can equally be seen to apply to society. Heraclitus suggests that whichever of the two ways we look at the universe: whether we see it as the product of chance or whether we see it as the product of necessity, what cannot be denied is that it appears to form a coherent pattern. The outcome is the same if we regard society as either the product of contingency or of necessity: there is a recognizable social order in which we can or cannot participate. Heraclitus, if anything, appears to imply that any coherent order is both the product of necessity and contingency. Necessity dictates that human beings live in a society together according to established rules, contingency dictates the nature of a society and the manner in which its rules are formed and changed.

Conflict and contingency are as much a part of society as its established rules and practices. Moreover, conflict gives rise to the need for socially enforceable rules of justice, just as the need for rules presupposes conflict. In this respect I think Heraclitus is

right about the identity of justice and conflict. This identity Heraclitus relates to a wider and interesting point about the mutually dependent nature of conflict and harmony. As we have seen in the fragment culled from Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics* Heraclitus expresses the unity of harmony of conflict in terms of two similes: 'There would be no attunement without high and low notes nor any animals without male and female both of which are opposites.'⁶¹ This view is echoed in the fragments: 'The hidden attunement is better than the obvious one' and 'They do not comprehend how a thing agrees at variance with itself'.⁶² The implication of these fragments is that a society which includes within itself the greatest variety of social and cultural groupings may very well be the most harmonious. And the more indirect and subtle this harmony the more effective it may be.

The idea of a hidden harmony arising from the conflicting pursuits of different individuals and groups is echoed in modern times in the thinking of the early political economists and, in particular, in Adam Smith's idea of the invisible or hidden hand which guides the activity of individuals in a market society. This is an idea which also much impressed Hegel and is incorporated in his *Philosophy of Right*. In the section on civil society he remarks that 'in the course of the actual attainment of selfish ends – an attainment conditioned in this way by universality – there is formed a system of complex interdependence, wherein the livelihood, happiness and legal status of one man is interwoven with the livelihood, happiness and rights of all'.⁶³ Hegel clearly thinks this system of unintentional or hidden interdependence preferable to a direct and centrally enforced system of interdependence. The advantage of the market system is that a 'hidden attunement' is brought about so that the pursuit of individual ends is thereby 'conditioned by universality'. Marx's scepticism about this hidden attunement led him, of course, to recommend a consciously planned form of attunement in a socialist society.

Heraclitus's philosophy has a marked influence on Hegel's thinking about history and war. Unlike his immediate forerunner, Kant, Hegel shows no great enthusiasm for the idea of perpetual peace among nations. Kant published in 1795 a powerful and persuasive essay on the topic of perpetual peace ('Zum Ewigen Frieden') which called for the formation of an international federation which would have as its main purpose the

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elimination of the evil of war. In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel expresses no great sympathy for Kant's views:

There is no Praetor to judge between states; at best there may be an arbitrator or a mediator, and even he exercises his functions contingently only, i.e. in dependence on the particular wills of the disputants. Kant had an idea for securing 'perpetual peace, by a federation of states to adjust every dispute . . .'. This idea presupposes an accord between states; this would rest on moral or religious or other grounds and considerations, but in any case would always depend ultimately on a particular sovereign will and for that reason would remain infected with contingency.⁶⁴

Whereas Kant thinks it undesirable that individual states should always wholly be the arbiter of their own fates, free to declare war when they see fit, Hegel thinks it inevitable and, to an extent, beneficial that states should be in this position. He appears to find Kant's hopes for the international order too conciliatory and timid. Hegel does not agree fully with the moral injunction which finds favour with Kant to seek to avoid war at all costs. He shares Heraclitus's view of war as a catalyst of change (up to his time) integral to the human condition. War, Hegel suggests, has even an ethical 'moment':

War is not to be regarded as an absolute evil and as a purely external accident, which itself has some accidental cause, be it injustice, the passions of nations or the holders of power, etc., or, in short, something or other which ought not to be . . . War is the state of affairs which deals in earnest with the vanity of temporal goods and concerns . . . War has the higher significance that by its agency, as I have remarked elsewhere, the ethical health of peoples is preserved in their indifference to the stabilization of finite institutions; just as the blowing of the winds preserves the sea from the foulness which would be the result of a prolonged calm, so also corruption in nations would be the product of prolonged, let alone 'perpetual' peace.⁶⁵

Hegel finds a positive value in war on grounds similar to those of Heraclitus. The modern state is, for Hegel, the legitimate arbiter of its own fate, where states are in dispute there can be no other power to which ultimately to appeal. States are, in this sense, very much like individuals in modern society. They have to be seen as self-determining and developing their own personalities and cultural forms. But unlike the citizen in modern society state-individuals cannot be subject to the rule of law. So vital is

their independence and individuality to the maintenance of their personality that states can enter into federations only on conditions that must ultimately lead to their break-up. Since, even within a federation, where a dispute with another state arises, each state will reserve for itself the right to decide where justice lies. Moreover, given the nature of international society it will still have the right and power to do so. Thus, even within a federation – unless the personality of each of its member states is extinguished – war remains the factor which finally decides a conflict between states.

War for Hegel, as for Heraclitus, is not simply to be deplored as an instrument of policy. War is, for Hegel, the manner in which the state expresses its personality, both internally and externally, in the most forceful way. War can be a most reliable means of preserving the internal stability of a state threatened by domestic conflict. National war may, in Hegel's terms, bring the individual back to the universal. In the exigency of war the individual citizen is often forced to forfeit his individual private interest for the sake of the common, national good, for a time at least, the good of the nation as a whole becomes the focus of the individual's attention. For Hegel this is an indisputable point: 'This fact appears in history in various forms, e.g., successful wars have checked domestic unrest and consolidated the power of the state at home'.⁶⁶

Heraclitus believes that conflict is at the root of all that is vital and worthy in human life. Without conflict and war social relations, individual striving and effort atrophy and perish. Hegel appears to endorse this view in his analysis of modern civil society: Hegel, just as does Heraclitus, sees the positive side of conflict and antagonism among individuals and states. 'In enmity amongst men, the one sets himself up independently of the other, or is for himself and realizes himself; but unity and peace sink this independence in an indivisibility [*Ununterschiedbarkeit*] or unreality.'⁶⁷ Individual personality both amongst men and states depends on the existence of conflict and opposition. Thus, war is not always to be deplored since without it a state may often not be able to express its personality.

However, in taking this view of the relations among states Hegel exposes himself to the criticism, voiced by Bertrand Russell, that his doctrine justifies 'every external aggression that can

possibly be imagined'.⁶⁸ Hegel appears to be ascribing to the idea of the virtue of militarism by pointing out the beneficial effects, both domestically and internationally, of the pursuit of conflict. However, it can be said in defence of Hegel, that he does not see it as his task in his political philosophy to recommend to states and rulers how they should conduct their affairs. He sees his task as a philosopher merely to analyse and report on the society he finds before him. The philosopher, as Hegel famously puts it, 'comes on the scene too late' to give 'instruction as to what the world ought to be'.⁶⁹ Thus for Hegel to suggest that war has a positive or beneficial side is not the same as actively advocating war as a means of resolving international disputes. Thus, although Hegel does not in the passages cited go out of his way to condemn war, he does not, as Russell implies, openly advocate it as an instrument of policy. Hegel believes he is merely depicting the world as it is, and in the world as it is, it seems to him that war is at some times unavoidable and not always wholly evil.⁷⁰

Hegel sees war as an integral part of the dialectical flow of the relations among states in his time. The question of the function that war performs cannot be decided, in his view, in isolation from the development of world affairs. War must be seen in the context of world history as a whole which is, for Hegel, the teleological product of world spirit or mind (*der Weltgeist*). In war, he suggests, world spirit brings about many of those vital changes of course which are necessary to its unfolding and self-realization. As Hegel in a chilling passage puts it:

Justice and virtue, wrongdoing, power and vice, talents and their achievements, passions strong and weak, guilt and innocence, grandeur in individual and natural life, autonomy, fortune and misfortune of states and individuals, all these have their specific significance and worth in the field of known actuality; therein they are judged, and therein have their partial, though only partial, justification. World-history, however, is above the point of view from which these things matter. Each of its stages is the presence of a necessary moment in the idea of world spirit, and that moment attains its absolute right in that stage.⁷¹

From the standpoint of world history the suffering and pain caused by any individual war can appear slight and insignificant. World history is a drama in whose unfolding the fate of individuals and states can be decided in the most arbitrary of ways. Hegel encourages the rational spectator not to be put off by these

events but, rather, to see in them evidence of a greater and more far-reaching purpose. The spectator should look beyond the confusing and distressing appearance of war to the underlying reality of the development and advance of spirit. Marx and Engels similarly do not take a wholly negative attitude towards the occurrence of war and conflict. Like Hegel, they look to the positive side to see what might emerge from such conflict. Marx even attempted, for instance, to discover the positive side to the horrendous defeat of the Paris proletariat in the 1871 Commune. But it is to Lenin we must turn for an interpretation of history which mirrors most closely Hegel's dialectic of war. Lenin's essay on *Imperialism*, written at the height of the 1914–18 war, although deploring the destruction and havoc wrought by the war, sees it as presenting an enormous opportunity for the international working class to go on to the offensive. Lenin regarded the foundations of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 – in which he played such an enormous part – as having been set by the sacrifices and depredations of the World War.

Heraclitus, Hegel and Marx

There are many paradoxes which Heraclitus's aphoristic philosophy brings to light. Just as with Hegel and Marx, the whole of his thinking is premised on the assumption that all is not as it seems to the ordinary person. In Heraclitus's view the ordinary individual is too easily puzzled and confused by paradox and contradiction and is, as a result, too prepared to remain in ignorance. He expresses regret in the first of his preserved fragments that 'although this account (*logos*) holds forever, men ever fail to comprehend both before hearing it and once they have heard. Although all things come to pass in accordance with this account, men are like the untried when they try such words as I set forth, distinguishing each according to his nature and telling how it is.'⁷² Most live in a twilight world where the true order of the universe is not visible to them. In this twilight world they perceive all as accident and chance whereas in fact everything is governed by an eternal law. This eternal law is called by Heraclitus the *logos* which is, as Guthrie explains, 'both human thought and the governing principle of the universe'.⁷³ Because

the *logos* is thought it is in principle accessible to every individual but, in Heraclitus's view, most individuals choose to ignore it so that they are from his point of view like individuals asleep not aware of the waking world. The conflictual, dialectical nature of the world is not properly known to the majority, since the majority see conflict and paradox as something merely to be avoided. But for Heraclitus these apparent contradictions, conflicts and paradoxes belie an immanent and underlying order. The *logos* is both everywhere and present in everything.

There are notable similarities between Heraclitus's and Hegel's metaphysics. This is not surprising in view of the almost complete approval Hegel shows for Heraclitus. Hegel, like Heraclitus, believes in the permanency of conflict, opposition and contradiction in our outward experience, and shares Heraclitus's view that the paradoxes this causes belie an immanent and rational order. Hegel calls this immanent order spirit or mind (*Geist*) in contrast to the *logos* of Heraclitus, but Hegel's spirit shares with Heraclitus's *logos* the characteristic of being both representative of human thought and the governing principle of the universe. With Heraclitus the *logos* has its material or natural counterpart in fire. The ordering of the universe (*kosmos*) is, Heraclitus says, 'the same for all, no god or man has made, but it ever was and is and will be: fire everliving, kindled in measure and in measures going out.'⁷⁴ This is not a view that Hegel shares. He distances himself from the cosmology of the pre-socratic philosopher. In comparison with the earlier pre-socratic philosopher who had chosen water and air as their first principle Hegel finds preferable the idea of fire because it depicts a process of 'absolute unrest';⁷⁵ however, in Hegel's view the primary principle of the universe should not be material or physical. The first principle of reality cannot be perceived by the senses, it is, Hegel thinks, wholly and exclusively spirit. In Hegel's metaphysics there is nothing in the material world which wholly corresponds with spirit (*Geist*).

Hegel derives a great deal of his dialectic from his reading of Heraclitus's philosophy. Above all, he sees the surviving fragments as establishing a pattern to follow in the treatment of paradox and contradiction in philosophy. He takes from Heraclitus the idea that philosophical analysis ought not to be put off by apparent difficulty and contradiction in the expression of a

view. Heraclitus shows how paradox and contradiction are more often than not a necessary, if sometimes painful, part of experience. Hegel appears also to derive from Heraclitus the view that once contradiction and paradox have been properly comprehended they are already some way towards being resolved. This is, for Hegel, the crucial task of philosophy: in reducing paradox and contradiction to their constituent element it paves the way for knowledge of the Idea. For Heraclitus the task of the philosopher is to discover the *logos* in the incomplete and confused experience of the shared world of human beings. Both Heraclitus and Hegel believe that through the broadening of our understanding and our reason it is possible to come to terms with conflict and strife. In this respect, as we shall see, Marx differs.

Heraclitus's attitude is that we should not be puzzled by division and conflict, but that we should view them as an expression of the dynamic nature of the universe. This is an attitude Hegel shares. Hegel tries to work out in greater detail the principle of dialectical change which underlies Heraclitus's philosophy in his *Science of Logic*, by stressing that identity is identity only through difference. In his *Logic* Hegel comes to the conclusion:

Our consideration of the nature of contradiction has shown that it is not, so to speak, a blemish, an imperfection or a defect in something if a contradiction can be pointed out in it. On the contrary, every determination, every concrete thing, every notion is essentially a unity of different and distinctive moments, which by virtue of their clear and essential difference pass over into contradictory moments.⁷⁶

Thus, on Hegel's own authority, we can regard Heraclitus's dialectic as the first, and perhaps most important, forerunner of the Hegelian dialectic. This dialectic is given its full expression in Hegel's *Science of Logic*.

On the surface it appears we have less direct evidence of the influence of Heraclitus on Marx. We know that Marx was well versed in Greek philosophy since his doctoral dissertation submitted at Jena University in 1841 deals with the philosophy of Democritus and Epicurus. Marx's own Hegelian background implies also that he could hardly avoid being familiar with the doctrines of Heraclitus, and it is not difficult to note the parallels in Marx's work where he appears to have been strongly influenced by Heraclitus's aphorisms.

But there is more startling and historically telling evidence than this. We know from Marx's extraordinary and voluminous correspondence with Engels that Marx regarded Heraclitus as 'the most succinct of philosophers'.⁷⁷ Marx had his attention drawn once again to Heraclitus's work at a most important point in his intellectual development in the writing of *Capital*. The German socialist leader Ferdinand Lassalle published a two-volume work on *Die Philosophie Herakleitos des Dunkeln von Ephesos* in 1858 of which Marx received copies in January of that year.⁷⁷ Marx was most anxious to read the work and wrote by February 1 to Engels in Manchester with his first comments. Despite thinking the book 'au fond, a very silly concoction' Marx shows a deep interest in the connection between Heraclitus's thinking and Hegel's dialectical method. Marx favours the Hegelian interpretation of Heraclitus over that of contemporary philologists but laments Lassalle's failure to make any 'critical reflections on dialectics as such'.⁷⁸

Marx is particularly struck also by a reference which Lassalle makes to the relevance of Heraclitus's method for the study of political economy. Lassalle sees promise in Heraclitus's comments about the interchangeability of gold with all commodities for the development of a new theory of money.⁷⁹ Marx returns to this point in a later letter to Engels, quoting at length from Lassalle's work. Although Marx strongly disapproves of the way in which Lassalle mismanages the interpretation of political economy in this excerpt he none the less gives credit to Lassalle for having drawn attention to this remarkable point. Marx sees it as 'a surprising insight'⁸⁰ which pays testimony to the strength of Heraclitus's dialectical approach. Marx goes on to show how his own theory of money is, with none of Lassalle's pedantries, similarly founded on Heraclitus's insight. Since Marx's theory of money plays a central role in his analysis of capitalism we have here also the most striking evidence for the centrality of Heraclitus's philosophy in the development of Marx's dialectical method.

Notes

The best known source for Heraclitus's fragments is H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (6th edition, Berlin, 1951) to which reference is

made below. English quotations are taken from C. H. Kahn's recent translation of the fragments in the *Art and Thought of Heraclitus*. Another English rendering of the fragments can be found in K. Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers*.

I am grateful to Rosemary Wright of the Classics Department at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, for her comments on the chapter. On her advice, I have slightly altered the wording of K. Freeman's translation of *Parmenides* (Note 10).

1. *Hegel's Logic*, (part one of the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Science*), 81A, p. 117; *Werke* 8, p. 173. Cf. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 1, pp. 56–7, *Werke* 19, p. 79.
2. Kahn, C. H., *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 1.
3. Kahn, LXIV, p. 59; Diels 121.
4. Guthrie, W. K. C., *History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. 1, Cambridge University Press, 1962, p. 413.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Kahn, p. 3.
7. Hegel, G.W.E., *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 1, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1968, p. 297; *Werke* 18, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1970, p. 343.
8. Hegel, *History of Philosophy*, Vol. 1, pp. 278–9; *Werke* 18, pp. 319–20.
9. Hegel, *History of Philosophy*, Vol. 1, p. 65; *Werke* 18, p. 303.
10. Freeman, K., *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1948, p. 42.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Hegel, *History of Philosophy*, p. 279; *Werke* 18, p. 320.
13. Hegel, *History of Philosophy*, p. 277; *Werke* 18, p. 318.
14. Cf., *Zeno of Elea*, tr. and ed. H. D. P. Lee, Cambridge, 1936, pp. 42–63.
15. Hegel, *History of Philosophy*, p. 270; *Werke* 18, p. 310.
16. Hegel, *History of Philosophy*, p. 282; *Werke* 18, p. 323.
17. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book VI 3T, 1005a.
18. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 7T, 1012a.
19. *Science of Logic*, tr. A. V. Miller, Allen & Unwin, London, 1969, p. 129; *Werke* 5, pp. 139–40.
20. *Metaphysics*, Book VI 3T, 1005a.
21. *Metaphysics*, Book V. ch. VII, 1011a.
22. *The Presocratic Philosophers*, ed. A. Mourelatos, Anchor Books, New York, 1976, p. 189, first published in *Mind*, 1951.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. 1, p. 492.
25. Kahn, L, p. 52; Diels 91.
26. Kahn, L, p. 52; Diels 12.
27. Hegel, *History of Philosophy*, p. 283; *Werke* 18, p. 325.
28. Hegel, *History of Philosophy*, p. 282; *Werke* 18, p. 325.

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29. I take K. Popper to be making a similar point in his Preface to the *Poverty of Historicism*, (Routledge, London, 1961), p. v–vii when seeking to refute historicist claims to predict the future.
30. Kahn, p. 14.
31. Kirk, 'Natural Change in Heraclitus' in Mourelatos's *The Presocratic Philosophers*, p. 189.
32. Kahn, CI; Diels 60.
33. Kahn, LXXIV, p. 63; Diels 59.
34. Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy*, p. 443 and 443n. Guthrie provides this rendering on Kirk's authority.
35. Kahn, p. 193.
36. Kahn, XLIX, p. 53; Diels 126.
37. Kahn, LXX, p. 61; Diels 61.
38. Kahn, LXXI, p. 61; Diels 9.
39. Kahn, p. 187.
40. 'If Heraclitus does not tell men how to achieve true wisdom, he does the next best thing. He communicates to them, in a suitably oracular style, the truths that his own insight have shown him.' Those truths are the content of what Heraclitus calls 'the logos'. Hussey, *The Presocratics*, Duckworth, London, 1972, p. 39.
41. Kahn, I, p. 29; Diels 1.
42. Kahn, III, p. 29; Diels 2.
43. See Hussey, *The Presocratics*, p. 39.
44. Kahn, LXVII, p. 59; Diels 110, 111.
45. Kahn, LXX, p. 61; Diels 61.
46. Kahn, p. 188.
47. Hegel, *History of Philosophy*, p. 293; *Werke* 18, 338.
48. Kahn, p. 189.
49. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 28; *Werke* 5, 17.
50. Kahn LXVII, p. 59, Diels 111.
51. Kahn, LXIX, p. 61; Diels 23.
52. Kahn, LXXXIII, p. 67; Diels 53.
53. K. Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977, p. 16. Heraclitus 'being a typical historicist, accepts the judgement of history as a moral one; for he holds that the outcome of war is always just'.
54. Kahn, LXXXI, p. 67; Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, VII.1. 1235a25.
55. Kahn, LXXXII, p. 61; Diels 80.
56. Kahn, LXVI, p. 59; Diels 44.
57. Kahn, LXVI, p. 59; Diels 33.
58. K. Popper, *The Open Society*, p. 13.
59. Cf. Kahn, pp. 205–6.
60. Kahn, LXXV, p. 85; Diels 124. See also Kahn pp. 290–1 for a report on Theophrastus's work.
61. Kahn, LXXXI, p. 67.
62. Kahn, LXXVIII, p. 61; Diels 51.
63. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, para 183.
64. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, para 333; Comment.

65. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, para 324; Comment. The quotation is taken from Hegel's *Essay on Natural Law*, published in June 1801, see *Werke* 1.
66. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, para 324; Comment.
67. Hegel, *History of Philosophy*, 288, *Werke* 18, p. 332.
68. Russell, B., *History of Philosophy*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1961, p. 711.
69. Preface to the *Philosophy of Right*, tr. T. M. Knox, Oxford University Press, p. 12; *Werke* 7, p. 28.
70. For a sympathetic account of Hegel's view of war see S. Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*, Cambridge University Press, 1972, pp. 194-208. Constance J. Smith also deals with 'Hegel and War' in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 26, 1965, pp. 282-5. This issue of Hegel's supposed belligerence and nationalism in his political theory is dealt with in detail in W. Kaufmann (ed.), *Hegel's Political Philosophy*, Atherton, New York, 1970.
71. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, para 345.
72. Kahn, I, p. 29, Diels 1.
73. Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy*, p. 428.
74. Kahn, XXXVII, p. 45; Diels 30.
75. Hegel, *History of Philosophy*, p. 287, *Werke* 18, p. 330.
76. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 422, *Werke* 6, 79.
77. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 40, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1983, p. 397.
78. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 40, p. 255. Marx's first impression of the book was that it 'seems altogether Old Hegelian. Very possibly the legal tradition of hermeneutics came in useful for the interpretation and comparison of passages.'
79. *Collected Works*, 40, p. 260. Marx is referring to Heraclitus's aphorism: 'All things are requital for fire, and fire for all things, as goods for gold as gold for goods'. Kahn, XL, p. 45; Diels 90.
80. *Collected Works*, 40, p. 260.

2

Kant's Dialectic and Hegel's *Logic*

Introduction: Kant and the limits of reason

Hegel's *Logic*, as does his dialectical method in general, derives much of its impetus from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. There are two aspects of Kant's *Critique* which are of particular importance for Hegel's *Logic*. They are the transcendental logic and the transcendental dialectic. In the transcendental logic Kant outlines those categories which in his view make possible our experience. Hegel, as we shall see, extends this insight in his *Logic*. In the transcendental dialectic Kant enters into a criticism of traditional metaphysics for having employed these categories in an over-ambitious way. But, in comparison with Hegel's dialectic Kant's transcendental dialectic is a somewhat more modest affair. Kant's objective in outlining the dialectic of reason in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is to demonstrate the inherent limitations of human understanding and knowledge. He believes that human reason is driven into posing questions which lead inevitably into contradiction.¹ Kant thinks that the way out of these difficulties is for human reason to recognize within itself the origin and source of this dialectic. Thus, human reason can act as a curb on its own ambitions. No such modesty accompanies Hegel's enthusiastic advocacy of dialectic. With him dialectic is the very essence of our experience; properly developed and understood it conveys nothing less than the truth.² Hegel is prepared to defend dialectic against all detractors, suggesting that where dialectic has been deplored it has either not been fully understood or not properly been employed. He claims that dialectic has gained its many opponents and detractors because it often appears as the enemy of common sense and conventional thought. In his view, this is

not to be helped since much genuine philosophical insight does run counter to the opinions of common sense. Like Plato, Hegel believes the philosopher has often to ascend to the sunlight and away from the dark shadows cast by our everyday conceptions.

The contrast between Hegel's and Kant's dialectic is an illuminating one. Kant regards his account of transcendental dialectic as uncovering the 'illusions [*Scheine*] of transcendental judgements'³, as, in other words, unmasking the pretensions of human reason to attain an unconditioned reality beyond that which is conveyed to us by the understanding and our senses. By demanding that the world revealed to us by our understanding conform with the demands of our reason we are, Kant thinks, led necessarily to error. For Kant these errors are natural and inevitably recur even after they are acknowledged and understood to be illusions:

These conclusions are, then, rather to be called pseudo-rational than rational, although in view of their origin they may well lay claim to the latter title since they are not fictitious and have not arisen fortuitously, but have sprung from the very nature of reason. They are the sophistications not of men but of pure reason itself. Even the wisest man cannot free himself from them. After long effort he perhaps succeeds in guarding himself against actual error, but he will never be able to free himself from the illusion, which unceasingly mocks and torments him.⁴

What makes reason at fault in wanting to apply its ideas directly to the world of understanding (namely, the everyday world and the world of scientific discovery) is that in doing so reason supposes it has a privileged access to a reality underlying the ordinary world of experience. Kant thinks knowledge of such a world entirely out of the question. As the world we experience is a composite of what is derived through intuition (*Anschauung*) via our senses and what we furnish through the ordering activity of our cognitive faculties we cannot assume that we have a direct and privileged access to an external reality. But our reason naturally wants to impute to the world we experience the finality and completeness that reason as a faculty demands. In doing so our reason overlooks the fact that the ordinary world is already partially a product of the mind, and thus whatever patterns and regularities it may evince may already have upon them the imprint of our understanding. Thus reason overreaches itself by

conceiving of the experienced world as an ultimate reality to which its own ideas of finality and totality apply.

The kind of idea which, in Kant's view, our reason may harbour and seek illegitimately to impute to the world of our experience is the view that the world has a beginning in time. Reason, he thinks, naturally looks for the totality of the conditions underlying an object or an event. The difficulty is that as our experienced world can provide no absolute and definitive test of the reality of such an idea, competing and, indeed, opposed ideas can be put forward to explain the totality of those conditions underlying an experience or an object. The idea that the world must have a beginning in time can, for instance, be opposed by the idea that the world has always existed in more or less its present form.⁵ In Kant's view the conflict between these two ideas can never be resolved providing we think it possible to treat our experience in such a fundamentalist way. The only satisfactory resolution of this dialectical conflict for Kant is to recognize the hopelessness of applying directly to our experienced world what are, in his view, merely subjective demands of reason. These cosmological ideas 'are such that an object congruent with them can never be given in any possible experience, and that even in thought reason is unable to bring them into harmony with the universal laws of nature'.⁶

Dialectic then with Kant is not a device for enlarging our knowledge of the world. He uses the term 'dialectic' to refer to an errant reason which inevitably undertakes to do more than it can ever hope to achieve. Human reason is, in Kant's view, guilty of issuing a false prospectus concerning its own capabilities. Our reason seeks to enclose everything it lights upon within the conditions of its own operation. Reason, in short, follows a certain pattern in its activity and mistakenly demands that the world conform to that pattern. 'Dialectic' is the title which Kant gives to the false prospectus issued by our reason. This false prospectus leads to what Kant calls the 'transcendental problems of pure reason' which are fundamentally of two kinds, the 'antinomies of pure reason' and the 'paralogisms of pure reason'.⁷

Kant's transcendental dialectic is primarily destructive in that it undermines many of the claims of previous metaphysics and philosophy. Transcendental dialectic undermines, in particular,

the claims to objective truth of the great system builders of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries like Spinoza, Leibniz, and Kant's own precursor, Wolff, and also puts in doubt the claims of the empiricist philosophers such as Locke and Hume who similarly believed that in our sense-impressions they had found the sole true foundation for all our knowledge.⁸ For Kant we can make accurate assertions about only the world given to us by both our senses and our understanding, and even then those assertions are valid from a phenomenal and thus, ultimately, subjective human point of view. As Walsh notes:

The antinomy of pure reason is the name Kant gives to the result produced when human reason is given its head and allowed to think about the world, its nature and conditions of existence without any restrictions; what happens in these circumstances, he says, is that we find ourselves driven to contradictory conclusions each of which appears to be intellectually compelling.⁹

Kant's transcendental dialectic concentrates in particular on the conclusions of religious philosophy. Theologians and philosophers such as the great Catholic theologian, Aquinas, had repeatedly sought to prove that God objectively exists. And in Kant's day under the influence of Leibniz and Wolff something like this view was accepted in German philosophical circles. To support this view philosophers drew attention to those aspects of our experience which appear inexplicable without reference to the existence of a divine or providential being. The origin of the world is, of course, one such apparent mystery, and this is an issue that Kant takes up in his first antinomy of pure reason. An equally contentious and enigmatic issue is raised by the existence of human life and the apparent autonomy that individuals enjoy. This again is not a matter that is immediately explicable in secular terms and has at some point added strength to the monotheist lobby. Kant tries to deal with the question of human freedom in the third antinomy; the paralogisms deal with the equally knotty problem of the apparent continuity of the human intellect or soul. In all these instances theologians have attempted to extrapolate from paradoxical aspects of our experience a view of the world which sees a single divine being as its creator. Although Kant is not entirely hostile to the theological enterprise – indeed in many respects he sees himself as a devout Christian – his dialectic is aimed at what he regards as this illegitimate way of drawing

inferences from our experience. Rational inferences cannot be dogmatically drawn from our experience because not all of what underlies our experience is accessible to us. As our experience is grounded partly on what is provided by our cognitive faculties and partly on what is provided by our sense-impressions we cannot impute any completeness and finality to our knowledge of the world. Kant's transcendental dialectic tries to demonstrate the unreliability of our over-ambitious reason. In Kant's view, we cannot assume that the external world *in itself* corresponds with the structure and demands of human reason.

One of the difficulties with Hegel's dialectic is that often it is presented in too vague and grandiose a way. Kant's transcendental dialectic seems, on the other hand, to suffer from the opposite defect, namely, overprecision. The problem with Kant is that if, as he suggests, the cause of dialectic is the spontaneous tendency of reason to overreach itself, it is difficult to see how it does so merely in the apparently convenient ways that he suggests. Why indeed does the false application of our reason lead merely to paralogisms and antinomies? Kant draws his antinomies from the history of philosophy and the metaphysics of his day. As Jonathan Bennett points out, 'the theory of reason, as well as failing to show how dialectical difficulties about psychology and theology arise, also fails to illuminate those difficulties once they have arisen'.¹⁰ Surely, if reason oversteps the bounds of sense and understanding why is there such an orderly limit to the havoc it wreaks? It seems too convenient that reason should give rise merely to four antinomies.¹¹ Kant's list of antinomies appears to neglect the debate between materialist and idealist philosopher. It might be objected that it should be possible to subsume this debate under one of the existing antinomies, and there are, of course, many possible lines of connexion, but none seems to me strong enough to justify its exclusion. Its inclusion would give five antinomies of reason rather than the four, 'neither more nor fewer' that Kant suggests.¹² If reason is an entirely spontaneous and independent faculty it seems odd that its defects can be so neatly summarized. As it always seeks the wholly unconditioned, any limits set on its ability to fall into error will surely be transcended.

On these grounds Kant's transcendental dialectic seems, as a whole, unacceptable. Kant appears to give no satisfactory

account of why our over-ambitious reason gets itself into such odd difficulties and gives rise to illusion, nor is any explanation given as to why human reason should for centuries have fought a bitter and an apparently barren conflict over the four antinomies.¹³ Equally, it is difficult to agree with Kant that there is nothing to choose between the rival theses. Arguments may well be brought to bear which help demonstrate the superiority of one view over an other. For instance, many rational grounds and much evidence can be adduced for concluding that the universe as it is presently structured began at some point in time. However, it is not clear that reason has sent us down the wrong path in pursuing this line of enquiry. It may be difficult to discover a wholly satisfactory answer to such a question – clearly, there may have been other universes prior to the present one – but the effort is certainly worthwhile. Our knowledge grows and expands through the pursuit of the apparently unanswerable questions posed by our reason, and an essential part of this process is the supposition that Kant wishes to remove from our thinking, namely, that our reasoning may accurately depict what is going on in an independently existent reality. He is prepared to grant a 'regulative' role to the use of our reason in expanding our knowledge but this regulative role is seemingly then made pointless by denying any 'constitutive' role to reason. Who is going to persist in the search for the totality of conditions underlying an object when it is acknowledged from the outset that no such totality can be attained? The merit of Kant's dialectic is, of course, to draw attention to a number of recurrent patterns of human reasoning and some of its possible blind alleys and, at the same time, to draw attention to the inadvisability of making general (ontological) claims about the nature of being. He also makes an important contribution, as Hegel suggests, in stressing the unavoidable nature of dialectic. But he does not, as he believes, demonstrate for all time the limitations of reason and the possible problems with which it can deal. The outcome of any critique of reason, including Kant's, must surely be that reason can set no final limits on its own application and efficaciousness. We cannot know what new insights and forms of knowledge lie over the horizon otherwise there would be no new insights or new forms of knowledge. Kant's attempt to limit the use of human reason through his transcendental dialectic cannot be rated a complete

success. Dialectic has a more positive role to play than this. To see what that wider role might be we turn now to Hegel's *Logic*.

The scope and origins of Hegel's *Logic*

As an idealist philosopher, Hegel sees the universe as originating in thought and culminating in thought. Hegel combines this idealism with a thoroughgoing rationalism which sees all experience as ultimately explicable in conceptual terms. He uses the term *Geist* (which can be translated as either 'Spirit' or 'Mind') as shorthand for describing this complex arrangement. *The Science of Logic* (first published in two volumes in 1812–13) is an integral part of this idealist project which takes seriously the claims of reason both to be entirely self-generative and to encompass within itself all reality. In the *Logic*, as Charles Taylor puts it, 'thought and the determinations through which it operates . . . are not the apanage of a subject over against the world, but lie at the very root of things. For the reality which we perceive as finite subjects is the embodiment of *Geist* or infinite subject'.¹⁴ Hegel is no doubt ambitious in undertaking this task, and some may say that as a consequence his *Logic* is embedded in a metaphysics largely unacceptable to a modern audience.¹⁵ None the less, there is much to recommend in his outline of logic. He makes an important attempt at what is an essential philosophical task of demonstrating the immanence of concepts to the construction of our world. Like Marx, he sees the world in a large part as a human construction. Hegel also undertakes the equally important philosophical task of demonstrating the inter-connectedness of our major ontological concepts, and most significantly from the point of view of this study he develops and demonstrates in the *Logic* his dialectical method.

Any exposition of Hegel's philosophy must at some point come to grips with his objective idealism. His dialectical method lies at the core of this objective idealism. In the *Logic* Hegel describes the method as the absolute idea. Now this absolute idea is:

The universal, but the universal not merely as an abstract form to which the particular content is a stranger, but as the absolute form, into which all the categories, the whole fullness of the content it has given being to, have returned. The absolute idea may in this respect

be compared to the old man who utters the same creed as a child, but for whom it is pregnant with the significance of a lifetime.¹⁶

For Hegel the dialectic possesses the power of permeating the things of our experience, synthesizing them into a rational whole and presenting that whole to us in a philosophical theory. The dialectic unites the 'inner' and 'outer' world in a multi-faceted conceptual synthesis, consequently, the absolute idea has an all-encompassing social and historical significance.

This though is too ambitious a view of the power of philosophy and dialectic. Nor is it wholly in keeping with the dialectical method itself. For the assertion that everything ultimately lies within philosophy depends paradoxically on the assumption that there is always something outside philosophy subsequently to be brought within its compass. Our thinking and the world are of course deeply interrelated but not in the absolute sense Hegel implies. There would be no world (nor thought) if the two were identical.

Hegel sees his dialectical *Logic* as responding to an objective need, not only in the development of philosophy, but in the development of the German nation.¹⁷ Germany was, Hegel believed, in danger of losing its philosophical heritage as a result of Kant's attack on metaphysics. This attack pushed into the background questions of religious and theological interest to such an extent that, he claims, 'even the former proofs of God are cited only for their historical significance'.¹⁸ Although Hegel thinks it greatly to Kant's credit that he had set in train the process which undermined the previously dogmatic metaphysics and theology Hegel finds him at fault for not having left anything new in its place. Kant and his followers had given the appearance of combining with 'ordinary common sense to bring about the downfall of metaphysics'.¹⁹ Kant's idea that the understanding ought not to go beyond phenomenal experience, otherwise it would give birth to nothing other than phantoms of the mind, had seemingly provided the scientific justification for entirely giving up speculative thinking.²⁰

Hegel, of course, exaggerates his case against Kant. It is a peculiar reading of Kant that comes to the conclusion that, for Kant, philosophy has to confine itself to placing limits on our thinking.²¹ This is a conclusion one might possibly draw from a

reading of Kant's theoretical philosophy. But for Kant it is practical philosophy which takes on a pre-eminent significance. In his book on *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1792) he looks, for example, at what he regards as the authentic content of the Christian experience, contained in its moral precepts. Although seen by some as atheistic Kant regarded the work as an attempt to revive the Christian faith in rapidly changing times. Kant therefore would dispute Hegel's view of the destructive impact of his philosophy.

None the less, Hegel thoroughly disapproves of the way in which Kant gives practical reason precedence over theoretical reason. It is this, Hegel thinks, that downgrades philosophy in general by giving up philosophy's claim to wholly dependable knowledge. Fortunately, logic had not suffered as greatly as other disciplines from the general decline in standing sustained by philosophy. Although rightly no longer regarded as providing the ability to think ('just as if one could not learn how to digest and move about until one had studied anatomy and physiology'²²), it was still taught in the institutions of learning and enjoyed a position amongst the sciences. However, there was no great virtue in this for Hegel, because logic in its received form had remained the same for a period of over two thousand years. Logic shows 'no trace of the new spirit which has arisen in the sciences no less than in the real world'.²³ It is, he thinks, a vain pursuit when the 'substantial form' of thinking has altered to try to preserve the old habits and practices of the study of logic; they are like 'withered leaves' which have to be removed by the new buds 'already growing at their roots'.²⁴

Hegel then undertakes to revolutionize logic according to principles developed in the newest philosophy of his time, in Kant's philosophy and the philosophies of his close contemporaries Fichte and Schelling. Hegel agrees with the view put forward by Fichte (based upon Kant's transcendental logic) that the ego or the self plays a crucial role in the formation of our experience. However, he does not agree with the empirical way Fichte presents this thesis. The role of the self in structuring experience has first of all to be established by philosophical argument and not simply be taken for granted. Fichte demonstrates part of the truth but fails to grasp it in its entirety. As Hegel concludes in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* Fichte:

Maintained the ego to be the absolute principle, so that from it, the direct and immediate certainty of self, all the matter in the universe be represented as produced . . . But this principle in just an equally one-sided manner he set aside; from the very beginning the principle is subjective, conditioned by an opposite, and its realization is a continual rushing onward in finitude [*Endlichkeit*], a looking back at what had gone before.²⁵

To be successful Fichte's subjective idealism has to be modified by the principles of Schelling's objective idealism. Schelling grasped that it was equally as important to hold that nature, systematically conceived, led us to the self as it was to hold that the self, understood philosophically, led us to nature. Yet although Schelling's overall principle is correct he tends to make the same error of presentation as Fichte. 'What is lacking in Schelling's philosophy,' Hegel suggests, 'is . . . the fact that the point of indifference of subjectivity and objectivity or the concept of reason, is absolutely presupposed, without any attempt being made at showing this is the truth'.²⁶ *The Science of Logic* provides the opportunity, Hegel thinks, for a full demonstration of the truth of Fichte's principle of the ego and the absolute of Schelling's philosophy.²⁷ But the two principles have to be taken together in Hegel's view, since Fichte's concept of the ego represents the element of subjectivity which is essential to any useful philosophy and Schelling's concept of the absolute represents the objectivity and truth at which all philosophy also must aim. The Kantian inspired attempt of Fichte's to deduce the world from the I or the ego and Schelling's seemingly mystical emphasis on speculative unity in the Absolute can be justified in Hegel's view as steps towards the attainment of the complete philosophical synthesis he is trying to attain in his *Logic*. Fichte's ego, Schelling's absolute and Kant's transcendental logic gain their correct place, Hegel would argue, in the sections on reality (in the doctrine of essence) and on the concept (in the doctrine of the concept) in the *Science of Logic*.

Idealist dialectic in the *Logic* – some criticisms

Hegel is nothing if not bold in his approach to philosophy. As he sees it, what is most novel about his *Logic* is its dialectical method.

In introducing the method to logic he regards himself as creating a new concept of knowledge in the human and natural sciences.²⁸ It is important for Hegel that this method should be seen to derive from philosophy and represent its own contribution to human knowledge. Hegel does not share the more modest view of the role of philosophy favoured by the empiricist, analytical and linguistic schools who see the task of philosophy as removing difficulties and clearing up confusions which may hamper our progress in everyday thinking and other 'first order' fields of enquiry.²⁹ Philosophy, he thinks, has to be set on the throne if it is to play any role at all. The philosopher cannot be content with the tasks of an underlabourer or a handmaiden. This claim of philosophy to superiority should be based on the systematic and reliable nature of its method of enquiry. Dialectic is scientific (*wissenschaftlich*) because it demonstrates how the object under examination is itself constituted, as he puts it: 'it can be only the nature of the content itself which spontaneously develops itself in the scientific method of knowing, since it is at the same time the reflection of the content itself'.³⁰ Like Heraclitus Hegel is looking for the inner order to the universe in a *logos* which is not only internally coherent but also accurately reflects the way things are.

Hegel goes a great deal further than Heraclitus though in spelling out the nature of the internal logic he thinks present in the universe. Hegel thinks it can be spelled out in a *science of logic*, as a method of comprehending the world which is both a logic and a theory of being (ontology). In Hegel's view it is the mastery of dialectical method in the science of logic which marks off our reason from the understanding. Whereas the understanding, he argues, merely distinguishes the properties of things and holds fast to these distinctions, reason is critical and negative. Reason undermines the distinctions of the understanding and makes them seem valueless and wrong-headed. However, Hegel also sees reason as positive. The truly dialectical critic does not stop at the merely negative outcome of the rational analysis of the properties and characteristics held dear by our understanding, rather rational analysis through the negation of the 'particular' attains the 'universal'.³¹

This distinction between reason and understanding is, as we shall see, a very important one for comprehending Hegel's

dialectic. It may be taken to mean a combination of two things, one of which is broadly acceptable and one of which is somewhat misleading. What is broadly acceptable is the suggestion that an analysis and criticism of the categories typically brought forward by our understanding such as quality, quantity, measure, appearance and essence does not leave us without anything further to discuss. With this aspect of Hegel's view of the 'negative power of reason' it is possible to agree. However, when he goes on to suggest that the critical activity of our reason not only negates the characteristics which the understanding isolates but also the objects of which they are the characteristics the argument becomes a great deal less plausible. To establish from the descriptive statements we make about things that objects are not what they first seem is not to establish, as Hegel appears to suggest, that objects are not ultimately real.

Michael Rosen describes this process in Hegel's philosophy which marks off reason from the understanding as one of 'determinate negation'. He also sees it as involving two features, namely:

1. Negation is not all negation but the negation of a determinate matter which dissolves.
2. That from which it results is essentially contained in the result.³²

Rosen also objects to the suggestion that thought can somehow become active and dissolve its object. However, he thinks it not an unusual occurrence for a philosopher to argue along such lines. 'Indeed,' Rosen says, 'when someone is thinking, asserting or negating then our language entitles us to say that there is *something* that he thinks, asserts or negates. This "something" is the "object" of the thinking, asserting or negative activity. But, encouraged by the surface structure of our language, philosophers have assumed that these objects are like "things" and share their status as entities'.³³ Rosen is thoroughgoing in his criticism. He not only believes Hegel overstates the impact of thought upon the world with his conception of determinate negation but also that nothing positive results from such a process of reasoning. Rosen is not prepared to defend Hegel even to the extent of supporting Hegel's claim that a new positive line of argument may emerge from the negation of a previous position. Rosen defends this conclusion by invoking two similes.

'Even if we concede that negation is a process which must adapt itself to the contours of its object, why should this be like moulding a piece of wax or chiselling a block of marble (which always leaves a new shape), rather than like unravelling a knot in a piece of string (which by no means leaves a new knot when we have finished)?'³⁴ However, it is not clear that the second simile works in the way Rosen would wish it to. A knot unravelled certainly may not leave us with another knot to deal with but it does leave us with a piece of rope or string with which to do something else. Undoing a knot clearly leaves us with something.

Rosen is, however, right to suggest that with Hegel we find a combination of the persuasive and less probable in explaining even the most perceptive parts of his dialectic. The great flaw in Hegel's objective idealism is that it identifies changes in the state of our knowledge with changes in the world we observe. Although the world and the state of our knowledge are interconnected, they may develop separately from each other and at a separate pace, and they never develop in such a way that the one fully determines alterations in the other. Because of his aversion to materialist philosophy, Hegel tends in his dialectic to exaggerate the power of reason. No doubt, it is useful to recognize the power that human reason has to make a nonsense of propositions raised by the ordinary understanding, and to recognize as well its power to synthesize the conclusions of this criticism. Little is gained, however, in thinking that the power our reasoning faculty has of generating generalizations which accurately summarize significant aspects of our experience, actually does away with our concrete experience. This is to follow too closely the path of the ancient sceptics. However astutely Hegel describes the process of generalizing our experience through reason in 'concrete universals' as a process that represents the *Mitbestimmung* (concurrence) of the thing,³⁵ he cannot be taken to have established the identity of reason with a supposedly self-dissolving concrete world.

It may well be true also that concrete universals conceptually synthesize our experience, but they do not establish the power of mind or spirit fully to overcome external reality. For instance, the concrete universal, 'the navy' quite neatly summarizes and ex-

presses the existence of all the surface ships, underwater vessels, shore installations and their personnel of the armed power of a state or a group of states. For the purposes of discussion then we can quite legitimately abstract from the actual existence of all these various physical objects and refer to them under their collective title. This kind of abstraction helps make sense of our experience and so facilitates rational discourse. The implications of Hegel's view is that once this concrete universal is derived in discourse the empirical existence of the navy is somehow negated.³⁶ But this confuses the thought of something with its reality. The power of synthesis of human reason is, no doubt, extraordinary but there is no justification for the kind of hyperbole which Hegel employs to describe its powers.

In a similar vein, Hegel in the initial chapters of the *Phenomenology* concentrates upon showing how 'the thing' given to us by our ordinary experience dissolves, and what develops in its place is not a world of such isolated, individual objects but a world of interrelated concepts. Here he tries to establish that our experience is at root conceptual. Things, objects and events can, according to this view, only be properly understood as part of an interrelated whole given sense and significance by our reason. Put in a non-idealist form this view makes a great deal of sense. Reason plays a vital part in intimating to us a common universe of experience, however, it is misleading to suggest that reason in giving this experience does away with any external impetus to our thinking. Hegel employs the dialectical method in the *Phenomenology* to show the external world is nothing and that the human, social world – the world of mind is everything. Absolute knowledge at the end of the *Phenomenology* surmounts or overcomes the object of consciousness.³⁷ However, the proper course for him to adopt was not to show the superiority of the one over the other but to show that the two worlds are co-extensive. Just as nothing properly enters human discourse without its being the product of our mind, so rational discourse can extend itself only to what is in nature or human society. This is a crucial point on which Marx parts company with Hegel's dialectic. Hegel accommodates the external world, so to speak, only in passing, whereas its presence is in fact permanent and, often, overwhelming.

The terminology of dialectical logic

It is interesting that in the Preface to the second edition of the *Science of Logic* published in 1831 Hegel asks for the indulgence of his readers because his undertaking was to a large extent new.³⁸ He was conscious of the novelty of his undertaking and excuses the difficulties that, as a consequence, arise on the grounds that the materials for his projected reform of logic were previously only sparsely available. There is, he says, 'available for the contents of the science only external material in the older metaphysics and logic'.³⁹ In this respect Hegel's project of revising previous logic and metaphysics can be usefully compared with Marx's in revising and criticizing classical political economy in *Capital*. Both are inspired by a similar purpose in that they were attempting to revolutionize a traditional discipline for what they held to be historical and epistemological reasons. Marx might equally be heard to complain of political economy, as does Hegel of traditional logic, that 'this traditional material . . . must be regarded as an extremely important source . . . even though what it offers is only here and there a meagre shred or a disordered heap of bones'.⁴⁰ Both thinkers seem intent on breathing new life into a dismal and apparently moribund science. This is perhaps why Marx found Hegel's *Logic* particularly valuable in putting together *Capital*.

In an often quoted letter of Marx to Engels, 16 January 1858, Marx speaks of having discovered some 'nice developments, for example, I have completely demolished the theory of profit as hitherto propounded'. And 'what was of great use' to him 'as regards method of treatment was Hegel's *Logic*' which he had 'again paged through by mere accident, Freiligrath having found and made me a present of several volumes of Hegel, originally the property of Bakunin'. This re-reading of Hegel's *Logic* clearly made a great impression on Marx for he concludes his comments with the remark: 'If ever a time comes when such work is again possible, I should like very much to write 2 or 3 sheets making accessible to the common human understanding what is rational in the method which Hegel discovered but at the same time mystified'.⁴¹ This question of the relationship between Hegel's *Logic* and Marx's method in *Capital* has been looked at more closely by Terrell Carver who comes to the conclusion, which is

most interesting in this context, that:

Neither 'the dialectic' nor Hegel's *Logic* represents a master key to Marx's work. For a methodological reason his arguments about capitalist society are derived from Hegel's treatises on logic, as well as from selected theorists of political economy and other sources. Some of these arguments are hardly intelligible unless their exact relationship with Hegel's work is grasped. Hence the *Science of Logic* is a valuable (though hitherto little-used) aid in making sense of Marx's arguments and of his comments on dialectical method. This work on method is of considerable interest to present-day students of society, particularly those taking *concepts* as primary data for analysis. Specifying as many facets as possible of a phenomenon, by sorting out (for example) 'positive' and 'negative' aspects of its concept, is a useful technique in analysis, an antidote at least to studies where only the 'operational' is counted as real.⁴²

Hegel is emphatic that the mode in which logic should be conveyed is through an adaptation and modification of our ordinary language. The use of language is what raises the human individual above other animals. Through permeating our desires, needs, inclinations, and sensations language, as a medium of our thought, humanizes our personalities and environment. For this reason Hegel, somewhat dramatically, describes logic as 'the supernatural element'.⁴³ Even our ordinary language represents something of an achievement in that it provides us with the power to generalize about our experience. The progress of education and science depends on the words of a language being used in a specialized sense. Logic represents a higher level of refinement again and thus, for Hegel, it stands as our paramount spiritual achievement. Natural science represents an important stepping-stone between our ordinary language and the thoroughgoing logical use of language. Natural science both sharpens the language of everyday discourse and introduces to it elements of its logical use. Where natural science has led the way Hegel intends to follow. Because the raw materials lie ready to hand in our ordinary language 'philosophy, therefore stands in no need of a special terminology'.⁴⁴

Here again we can see a parallel with Marx. Marx's approach in *Capital* is to take up many of the terms that are used in everyday life, such as commodity, money, wages and labour and to give them a more precise meaning in his analysis. Marx also gives the impression that no special terminology is required in political

economy other than a more systematic use of terms with which we are already familiar. Where new terms such as surplus value are employed they are coined from concepts already familiar to all. But just as the natural sciences do not take up words entirely as they form part of our ordinary vocabulary so Hegel does not intend to use words in his *Logic* precisely as they are to be found in everyday use. In our everyday use of language what we are familiar with (*bekannt*) is often for that very reason not properly known (*erkannt*) or understood.⁴⁵ Although Hegel has much that is harsh to say about his forerunners in metaphysics and logic he is prepared to acknowledge his debt to those philosophers who first systematically attempted to outline the categories of human thought and thus drew them out of their 'naturalness' in everyday life. Without the work of Plato and, particularly, Aristotle in sifting and sorting out our everyday use of terms logic would not be possible. This process of making thought the object of our thought Hegel regards as the beginning of all knowledge. Logic is, he suggests, first discovered through the contemplation of our use of language and it requires that the philosopher abstract from all those interests which normally occupy the human mind. It is a precondition of all philosophical thinking (and one that is met as well by formal logic) that the familiarity of our everyday experience be transcended. Although Plato's forms – which exist both logically prior to and metaphysically outside our world – do not in Hegel's view properly express the relationship between philosophical thought and reality they do, none the less, bring out the truth that logical thinking runs counter to the preconceptions and preoccupations of ordinary life. Hegel admits that in our everyday life we employ a kind of 'natural logic' which serves its purpose in a reliable way, but precisely because it works unconsciously it will not do to use it as a basis for a general and rational logic.⁴⁶

Hegel has something more against the natural logic we unconsciously employ in everyday life other than its inaccuracy. He thinks it harbours a conception of the use of logic that is harmful and misconceived. Natural thinking often mistakenly regards logic as a tool or a means to be taught, mainly to young people, as a preparation for the difficulties and problems that may face one in life. In doing this it mistakenly and unconsciously undervalues logic. Logic should not, in Hegel's view, be taken as providing a

key to knowledge which we can turn to and use at will. Hegel points to the contrast between this everyday view of logic with the everyday view of the manner in which we see our other natural attributes are related to us. No one thinks of describing their feelings or needs as merely serving them. We think of our needs and feelings (quite rightly) as belonging to us in a particularly intimate way. Hegel wants to encourage a similar attitude to logic. Instead of seeing it merely as a useful appendage to our talents and capacities, it should be regarded as one of our essential attributes as human beings. Logic is thoroughly degraded if it is seen merely as a means. The position which logic finds itself in our natural thinking has, therefore, to be reversed. Just as we cannot conceive of our needs as standing in a subordinate relation to our personalities and characters so we ought to conceive of logic as an integral part of ourselves. Logic is essential to true self-consciousness in the same way that logic depends for its expression on the development of human self-consciousness. Rational thinking must be regarded as much a part of our personalities as human beings as any of our natural needs. In Hegel's view, either we are rational beings or we are nothing.

Any truly mature person must be fully conversant with logic. Hegel wants to raise the status of logic from being the special study of the patterns of correct human thought into the authoritative account of human rationality and freedom. In logic he wants to unite theoretical and practical reason.⁴⁷ This is a view which made a profound impression on Marx. The individual who merely employs logic when he sees fit is, according to this view, neither free nor rational. Marx similarly wanted to introduce rational deliberation into the conduct of ordinary life. But a great deal rests on what is taken to be the authoritative view of logic. Marx thinks it can be found through a critique of capitalism, Hegel through a critique of previous metaphysics.

Hegel thinks the defect of logic as it is found in ordinary experience is that it is 'unconsciously active'. The activity of thought', he continues, 'which is at work in all our ideas, purposes, interests and actions is . . . natural logic; what we consciously attend to is the contents, the objects of our ideas, that in which we are interested; on this basis, the determinations of thought have the significance of forms which are only attached to the content, but are not the content itself.'⁴⁸ It seems that the way

in which we visualize an object in our ordinary experience depends on our subjective intentions. Because what is foremost in our minds is attaining our purpose, the manner in which we describe and characterize the world appears minor and secondary. Thus, it seems the concepts employed are not of an object but *about* it. Natural logic combines with the ordinary understanding to produce the wrong synthesis. This causes confusion and misleads us into thinking that all the concepts we use to characterize objects are somehow accidental and related only to our purposes. But the important thing for Hegel is that we can discover a necessary relationship between an object and the concepts we use to describe and characterize it. He is not in the least happy to see our categories as mere subjective inventions for us to get along as best we can in the world. He demands that true logic be seen not as coming between ourselves and the world, but rather as part of the actual construction of the world. Hegel rejects Kant's view of the categories as *a priori* products of the human mind. Categories are, indeed, products of the mind, but Hegel wishes to see them also as the objective essence of the world. So Hegel wants to go one step further than the, arguably correct, assertion that our categories are subjective creations which, when properly used, may accurately depict the world, to make the less defensible assertion that the categories, when properly ordered, *are* the world. But this is not so. We may loosely speak of our categories when properly ordered expressing the essence of a situation or event, however, the use of essence in this context would mostly be taken to be metaphorical. Few would follow Hegel's path and suggest that our well ordered categories were the essence of things.

Hegel sees his task of criticizing the natural logic exhibited by our everyday use of language in the following way:

As impulses the categories are only instinctively active (in natural logic). At first they enter consciousness separately and are thus variable and mutually confusing; consequently they afford to mind only a fragmentary and uncertain actuality. The loftier business of logic is therefore to clarify these categories and in them raise mind to freedom and truth.⁴⁹

But because these categories are the 'very heart of things, their simple life impulse', the 'loftier business of logic' implies a great deal more than has hitherto been achieved by and presented in

formal logic.⁵⁰ The categories with which formal logic deals such as identity, negation and contradiction have much more far-reaching implications than are attributed to them by the formal logician. In Hegel's view, these categories have a concrete relevance for the accurate depiction of our experience. They cannot be applied piecemeal as categories are in our everyday lives. They have to be presented in such a way that they transcend the incomplete and inconsistent manner in which they are employed in natural logic. The categories of a consistent and coherent logic are present in our ordinary discourse but they are not systematically employed. The task of the dialectical logician is not only to isolate these categories, as Kant attempts to do, but also to present them in their concrete and systematic interconnexion. Just as Marx saw his task in the *Critique of Political Economy* not only as one of isolating the most important economic categories used in everyday life (a task to a large extent already accomplished by political economy), but also putting them into some systematic order (a task less successfully accomplished by political economy) so Hegel wants to refine and systematically order the categories of everyday life and formal logic. Here we might legitimately regard Hegel as having anticipated many of the preoccupations of twentieth-century linguistic philosophy. The linguistic philosopher sees the use of our language as in some way constitutive of our world. Thus in looking closely at the use we make of concepts we learn more about the nature of our world. But in formal logic the concrete truth of any proposition is regarded as irrelevant to the matter in hand. Just as contemporary economists are often happy to tinker with intriguing 'models' of economic activity without regard to the actual economy, the forms of thought are examined by logicians for their supposed power and truth independently of the content. For Hegel this is most ironic: that logic whose object should be truth rests upon a conception of thought which appears incompatible with this aim. Truth concerns both the content and the form. What equally perturbs Hegel about formal logic – since he regards the forms of thought as semi-divine – is that it regards these forms as merely finite 'and the truth, which is itself infinite, they seem incapable of attaining'.⁵¹ Hegel suggests that the layman rightly turns his back on such empty scholasticism which merely aims at supplying the rules for correct thinking without regard to what is

being said. What is being said is, after all, the matter of genuine interest and concern.

A logic of objects (or the unity of form and content)

The formal logician takes the view, as Cohen and Nagel put it, that:

In every attempt at a complete proof of propositions of practical importance we find two questions involved:

1. Are the propositions offered as evidence true?
2. Are the conclusions so related to the evidence as premisses that the former necessarily follow from and may thus be properly deduced from the latter?

. . . Logic as a distinctive science is concerned only with the second question – with the relation of implication between propositions. Thus the specific task of logic is the study of the conditions of under which one proposition necessarily follows and may therefore be deduced from one or more others, regardless of whether the latter are in fact true.⁵²

The formal logician distinguishes truth from validity. A deduction or an inference may be regarded as valid without what is being proposed actually holding true and, conversely, it is possible to make an invalid inference from true premisses. Hegel would not deny that either of these possibilities might occur but, in his view, it is highly undesirable that the teaching of logic should be based upon this distinction. In his view the distinction leads to an unacceptable separation between the objects of our experience and the structure of our thought. As I have suggested, a similar problem appears to beset the 'model-builders' of contemporary economic and social theory. They appear to have to choose between either internally coherent abstract accounts of the economy and society, which bear no relation to what they purport to describe, or detailed empirical descriptions of economic and social activities, which bear no relation to any coherent theory. But objects and their concepts are not totally distinct entities which are connected in a merely contingent and accidental way. Concepts and their objects are different sides of the same coin. It is their combination which gives rise to our experience. Thus the task of logic for Hegel is not merely to

provide tests of consistency in the use of our concepts but, rather it is to show how the consistent use of our concepts gives rise to a coherent and complete view of the universe.

The fundamental principle of formal logic is, Hegel holds, the principle of identity. Around this principle all its rules are framed. This principle is generally expressed in the banal equation ' $A=A$ '. Hegel accepts this principle as true, but it is true only because it is a tautology. Because this principle abstracts from anything that may be asserted in a systematic way about the world Hegel regards it as adding nothing to what we know already. People who actually reasoned in such a way and went around suggesting that a tree is a tree, or a plant is a plant would be regarded as insufferable. Hegel thinks formal logic cannot hope to succeed as a philosophical discipline with such an abstract and uninformative principle at its basis.

In Hegel's view the formal logician's view of logic rests upon an empiricist theory of knowledge. It is assumed as part of the enquiry that logic must abstract from all content, or to quote Cohen and Nagel once again, that 'logic as a distinctive science is concerned only with . . . the relation of implication between propositions'.⁵³ The form in which our understanding of the world is expressed is deemed susceptible to logical investigation whereas the content of what is expressed is deemed irrelevant from a logical point of view. Hegel interprets this as a distinction between certainty and truth. All truth is taken to lie in the content which is excluded from logic, and the method of the certainty of our knowledge is regarded as lying in a contentless logic. We might see this as another way of expressing the distinction between truth and validity which the formal logician accepts. The advocate of formal logic supposes 'that the material of knowing is present on its own account as a ready-made world apart from our thought, that thinking on its own is empty and comes as an external form to the said material fills itself with it and thus only acquires a content and so becomes real knowledge'.⁵⁴ But the result of separating the form of knowledge from its content and truth in this way is that the form always appears to be incompatible with the content. It seems *a priori* impossible properly to make the two distinct spheres of, on the one hand, rational and consistent thought and, on the other hand, the data given to us by our experience concur.

The incompleteness of this view of logic can be overcome, Hegel thinks, only by incorporating 'the material of knowing' in the philosophical presentation of logic. The form has to be shown to imply the content and contrariwise, the content has to be shown to imply the form. Hegel thinks this is not an innovation which is as arbitrary as it first appears. What the ordinary logician takes to be separated from the pure logical forms as content is not in fact wholly formless. Hegel thinks Kant falls into this error in proposing his concept of the 'thing in itself' (*Ding an sich*), in order to separate what legitimately derives from our experience from what pertains to the things we perceive. In Hegel's view, there are no things in themselves existing apart from our conceptions and thoughts, and to suppose that there is to fall into the trap of believing in empty abstractions.

He sums up his views on Kant's notion of the thing in itself in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* when he says:

The thing in itself expresses the object when we leave out of sight all that consciousness makes of it, all its emotional aspects, and all specific thoughts of it. It is easy to see what is left – utter abstraction, total emptiness, described still only as an 'other-world' [*Jenseits*] – the negative of every image, feeling and definite thought. Nor does it require much penetration, to see that this *caput mortuum* is still only a product of thought, such as accrues when thought is carried on to pure abstraction: that is the work of the empty ego [*Ich*], which makes the object from this empty self-identity of its own. The negative characteristic which this abstract identity receives as an object is also enumerated among the categories of Kant, and is no less familiar than the above empty identity. Hence one can read only with surprise the perpetual remark that we do not know the thing in itself, for there is nothing that we can more easily know'.⁵⁵

In taking this view Hegel is, of course, donning his idealist hat, but if we set to one side the ontological implications of his criticism of Kant's *Ding an sich* he can be seen as making the sound methodological point that the content given to us in sense experience is never totally devoid of conceptual structure. It is true that at the highest level of generality our sense experience gives us only a mass of indistinguishable perceptions, and these quite rightly cannot form the basis for logical analysis, but these perceptions can, in Hegel's view, be shown on closer inspection to be a mass of diverse and distinguishable objects which provide suitable material for conceptual analysis. For this reason his logic

is intended to be not merely a formal account of the rules of thought but also a concrete account of the logic of objects (*Sache*).⁵⁶

This logic of objects need not, in Hegel's view, be merely imposed from the outside on the usual structure of formal logic. He argues that when the rules of thought which generally make up formal logic are examined closely they can be shown to imply a great deal more than is usually supposed. For example it can be shown that the concept of identity crucially depends on the concept of difference, and that identity and difference are not, therefore, two mutually indifferent concepts as is often suggested by their separate classifications. The various categories with which logic usually deals should, in line with the experience they are supposed to reflect, be seen in interrelation. Hegel, therefore, sees his logic as a *reconstruction* in two senses. First of all Hegel sees his logic as reconstructing the apparently fossilized forms of traditional logic and, secondly, he sees it as reconstructing in a systematic way the forms of thought which have occurred to us in a more or less instinctive and unconscious way in our everyday lives. Marx's *Capital* might usefully be seen as a reconstruction in the same sense. He reconstructs both the ideas of the political economists and systematically constructs the economic categories of everyday life. The scope of logic as Hegel understands it therefore is considerable, encompassing both the issue of the validity of forms of reasoning and the truth of conceptions of reality.

The difficulty of regarding logic so widely as a logic of objects is that as the scope of human experience is potentially limitless it may seem at first an impossible task to draw together in one exposition the concepts that structure our world. But the endless stream that occurs to us when thinking of the world in this way is not, in Hegel's view, the proper way of looking upon our experience. The whole point about the use of categories is that it divides the undifferentiated mass or 'stream of consciousness' into distinguishable objects and events. Through the use of categories we internalize what is given in our sense awareness. We can never hope to synthesize what is given in our sense awareness in the form of sense awareness: such things as rivers, seas, mountains, lakes, roads, houses, cities and towns; however, the power of conceptual thinking is that it can abbreviate and summarize

these experiences in a manner that can be communicated to others. Such experiences as the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki might never be communicated to those who did not witness the event without the use of the concepts provided by our ordinary language. Because his logic draws together the concepts provided by our ordinary language and presents them as a systematic whole Hegel believes it has a vital contribution to make to our culture and education. Hegel's objective in the *Science of Logic* is no less than to make philosophical sense of our total experience. To do this concepts and the logical pattern of our thinking cannot be treated separately, they have to be dealt with as reciprocally dependent parts of a whole. This is why Hegel begins his logic with *being*, a seemingly abstract concept which refers paradoxically to everything.⁵⁷

The type of logic Hegel proposes here is, of course, closely related to Kant's transcendental logic. Like Kant, Hegel believes that the mind has a vital hand in shaping our experience.⁵⁸ Both believe that our thinking faculties play a generative role in making the objects of our perception and observation what they are. With Hegel, however, thought or spirit plays a more comprehensive part in shaping our surrounding world. Kant sees our thought as acting upon an existing empirical content, as therefore forming and shaping our perceived environment. Hegel, however, rejects the idea of an empirical foundation to our experience and suggests that the whole of our empirical experience and our *a posteriori* knowledge be seen as the product of a suprahistorical spirit (*Geist*). The story of spirit is the story of the world.⁵⁹ Whereas Kant presents the categories of the understanding in his transcendental logic as the subjective possibility of the formation of objects and events in our experience, Hegel not only regards the categories as subjectively making possible our objective experience but also as objectively creating it. Logical thought is objective in a literal sense for Hegel. The table of categories, drawn from Aristotle, which Kant outlines in his transcendental logic represents for Hegel the bare bones of an objective logic which goes to the roots of our experience. Properly dealt with the categories will give us the doctrine of being (*die Lehre vom Sein*).

But Hegel finds Kant greatly at fault for the way in which he takes the categories of his transcendental logic much as he finds them in Aristotelian logic. Hegel accuses him of taking the

categories as merely a series of 'contentless forms'. But Hegel does not see the categories like this as coming from the outside and giving structure and form to what we take in through our senses. This makes the categories appear too subjective and arbitrary in the work that they do in marking out and differentiating our experience. His response is to go to the opposite extreme and argue that the categories as well as being forms of mind are also forms of being. In his view, the categories not only shape our experience, they also make our experience. Thus, what Hegel requires of logic is that it outlines the nature of our world. Logical reason is, he suggests, substantial or real being 'which holds together within itself every abstract determination and is their substantial, absolute concrete unity'.⁶⁰ The categories and forms of argument of logic should be seen to correspond with the object of knowledge. In traditional logic it is wrongly assumed, in Hegel's view, that when judgements, syllogisms and definitions are set out that we are simply operating technical devices for the satisfaction of our thought. This is a mistaken view. If the logical forms are set out properly, Hegel thinks, they can be shown to be identical with reality.

Hegel's account of logic is, as I have said, a version of philosophical idealism. Hegel likes to believe that he is advocating an objective idealism which avoids the pitfalls of solipsism and transcendentalism. He thinks of his logical 'spirit' as immanent in human self-consciousness and its objects. His aspiration is to liberate philosophy 'from the opposition of consciousness'. He sees his *Science of Logic* as containing 'thought in so far as this is just as much the object in its own self, or the object in its own self in so far as it is equally pure thought'.⁶¹ In Kant's transcendental logic the function of the categories in the activity of the understanding is to give unity to the different sensations and impressions received in our intuition. Kant's intention is to show how the objects of our experience are constructed, and to stress that it requires an act of imagination to synthesize what is given to us by our senses. Kant does not go on to argue that the knowledge we thereby gain is a knowledge of things as they are in themselves. In his view, there is an inherent limitation to the knowledge we gain through the activity of the understanding, namely, that we cannot detach what we discern from the activity of the human imagination. Our knowledge appears imperfect because we

cannot be sure that our imagination depicts things as they are in themselves. Hegel, of course, disagrees. He sees the imagination when properly employed as merely portraying the world as it actually is. The imagination has the power, in Hegel's view, to reproduce the world as it appears to our senses.⁶² Imagination is not, however, the highest stage in the development of our knowledge and cognitive faculties precisely because it is limited by our sense experience. But by showing what is the case in our experience, as the imagination does, our cognitive faculties collectively establish that the world is through and through a product of thought. Because of this intellectuality of the world Hegel is, he thinks, without contradiction able to hold that truth consists in the correspondence of thought with its objects.⁶³ The pursuit of truth and the advocacy of philosophical idealism are, according to this view, one and the same thing. One of the tasks that the new logic has to carry out, therefore is to test the adequacy of the usual logical tools in performing the work of bringing our thought into line with its object.

The limitations of the judgement

Hegel finds it regrettable that in the former logic the cognitive tools of the judgement and the syllogism were dealt with uncritically and not subjected to investigation as to their adequacy and inadequacy in conveying the truth. The usual procedure in formal logic was, for example, simply to list the positive judgement as one of a number of possible forms of judgement whose worth and veracity depends wholly on what they are used to assert. But in Hegel's opinion, the logical tool of positive judgement, which simply asserts the individual is the universal (e.g. the apple is green, or the rose is red) is incomplete and, therefore, dialectical. This form of the judgement is surpassed in its usefulness and worth by other forms of judgement, such as the apodeictic judgement. Moreover, Hegel takes the view that the form of judgement is, in general, not compatible with the deepest truths. Indeed, he says, 'how should the judgement possibly contain truth seeing that either its notion and object do not agree or it lacks both notion and object'.⁶⁴ In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel goes on to suggest that the ordinary judgement be replaced

by the speculative judgement or proposition. In such a speculative judgement the defects of the ordinary judgement are overcome through the predicate being united with the subject as its essence.⁶⁵ A harmony is achieved between subject and predicate here which never seems possible with the ordinary judgement.

It may well be, for instance, in the positive judgement 'the rose is red' that this actually is the case. Hegel's point is, however, that the notion 'red' does not include within it the notion of rose. The connection between the subject and the predicate in the judgement is not a necessary one it is, rather, a contingent one. The rose in question might well have been any other colour or combination of colours. The true universal that corresponds with the object rose is not red but, rather, the species to which it belongs, namely, the species of 'flower'. We arrive at the more valid and useful generalization that the rose is a flower not merely by a process of judgement or of matching subjects to predicates, but by categorizing the object properly following the rules of the understanding. The aim of the judgement is, on the other hand, to attribute to the object which is being assessed the property which expresses most effectively the impression made upon our sensibility and intellect, and so to point out the representative properties of an object, whereas Hegel's concern is to point out the crucial determining features of an object. The best that the judgement can do towards attaining this goal is to be seen in the apodeictic judgement. Apodeictic judgements take the form: 'the object in such and such a guise or constituted in such and such a way is good, bad, right, wrong, etc.'. Hegel regards this as the highest form of judgement. 'This judgement is,' he says, 'truly objective; it is the truth of the judgement in general'.⁶⁶ Hegel thinks so highly of this judgement because here the subject in fact corresponds with the predicate. It is not merely supposed or asserted that the object is this, that or the other. It is established from the beginning what the object is and all that is sought is an instance or example of such an object. But because this judgement is, in Hegel's terms, able to attain objectivity it is not for him the typical form of judgement. Indeed, it is the form of judgement which demonstrates the need to pass on to higher forms of cognition. If the judgement has to be so modified and hedged in as it is in the apodeictic judgement to convey the truth then there

can be no surer evidence of its limitations and defectiveness as a logical form (or device or argument).

This criticism of the judgement as a form of knowledge represents a direct attack on one of the most important principles of Kant's philosophy.⁶⁷ For Kant the judgement represents the highest form of synthesis available to the human mind. The teleological judgement outlined in the *Critique of Judgement* provides, in Kant's view, the only avenue available to the human mind in seeking to make complete sense of the universe.⁶⁸ What sense we make of the universe should for moral reasons be based upon the conjecture of progress. This is too open-ended a view for Hegel. He is happy only with a speculative judgement which demonstrates the reality of improvement and the certainty of the worth of the world. For Hegel the syllogism is a higher form than the judgement because its outcome is complete agreement of the subject with the predicate, so there is no incommensurability between what is thought and the object of that thought. Hegel demands total objectivity of philosophy. Kant is, in Hegel's view, too ready to settle for approximation. Hegel was unprepared to accept the inevitable finitude of human knowledge, and the probable impenetrable nature of some facets of our experience. Because he sought an idealist, all-sided view of our experience he was not able to accept what he saw as the one-sided and subjective form of knowledge given to us by the faculty of judgement as fully adequate. Hegel sought not a passive synthesis for human experience in contemplating the world, but an active synthesis in belonging to (and being at home in) it. The truth for Hegel is not to be found in an isolated judgement but in a philosophical system.

Notes

1. *Critique of Pure Reason*, Aviii: 'But by this procedure human reason precipitates itself into darkness and contradictions; and while it may indeed conjecture that these must in some way be due to concealed errors, it is not in a position to detect them.'
2. *Science of Logic*, p. 830; *Werke* 6, pp. 576-7: 'The absolute (dialectical) method does not behave like external reflection but takes the determinate element from its own subject matter, since it is itself that subject matter's immanent principle and soul.'

3. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B354, A298.
4. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B397, A339.
5. Kant calls this the 'first conflict of the transcendental ideas'. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B454, A426.
6. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B490, A462.
7. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B396-8, A338-40.
8. 'But when empiricism itself, as frequently happens, becomes dogmatic in its attitude towards ideas, and confidently derives whatever lies beyond the sphere of its intuitive knowledge, it betrays the same lack of modesty [as the system builders]; and that is all the more reprehensible owing to the irreparable injury which is thereby caused to the practical interests of reason'. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B499, A471.
9. W. H. Walsh, *Kant's Criticism of Metaphysics*, Edinburgh University Press, 1975, pp. 195-6.
10. J. Bennett, *Kant's Dialectic*, Cambridge University Press, 1974, p. 282.
11. J. Bennett calls Kant's account of why there are exactly these four antinomies 'feeble', and adds, 'I do not know whether the theory of reason actually constrained Kant to select these four, or merely helped him to rationalize a selection he had made on other grounds'. *Kant's Dialectic*, p. 114.
12. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B490, A462.
13. 'The illusion of which he speaks was perhaps "natural and inevitable" to a thinker with Kant's background in rationalist metaphysics, but would be less dangerous for, say, a scientifically-minded positivist. The force of the argument may thus be more personal than Kant supposes.' W. H. Walsh, *Kant's Criticism of Metaphysics*, p. 173.
14. C. Taylor, *Hegel*, Cambridge University Press, 1975, p. 225.
15. 'This magnificent Hegelian synthesis has dissolved. After achieving an extraordinary ascendancy over the German intellectual world in the 1820s and 1830s, it began to wane a decade after his death in 1831 . . . His actual synthesis is quite dead. That is, no one actually believes his central ontological thesis, that the universe is posited by a spirit whose essence is rational necessity.' C. Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 538.
16. *Hegel's Logic*, tr. W. Wallace, Oxford, 1975 (Part One of the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*), p. 293; *Werke* 8, p. 398.
17. *Science of Logic*, p. 25; *Werke* 5, p. 13.
18. *Science of Logic*, p. 25; *Werke* 5, p. 13.
19. *Science of Logic*, p. 25; *Werke* 5, p. 14.
20. It is interesting to note that this is not how Kant saw his enterprise. As Walsh aptly puts it: 'To read Kant as if he were a positivist before his time, interested only in demonstrating that metaphysics is nonsense, is profoundly mistaken; the truth is that he is anxious to recommend a certain set of metaphysical convictions, if not exactly a set of metaphysical truths'. W. H. Walsh, *Kant's Criticism of Metaphysics*, p. 170.
21. 'Theoretically the Kantian philosophy is the Enlightenment reduced

to method; it states that nothing true can be known, but only the phenomenal; it leads knowledge into consciousness and self-consciousness, but from this standpoint maintains it to be subjective and finite knowledge. Thus although it deals with the infinite idea, expressing its formal categories and arriving at its concrete claims, it yet again denies this to be the truth.' *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, III, pp. 426-7; *Werke* 20, pp. 332-3.

22. *Science of Logic*, p. 26; *Werke* 5, p. 14.
23. *Science of Logic*, p. 26; *Werke* 5, p. 15.
24. *Science of Logic*, p. 26; *Werke* 5, p. 15.
25. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 3, p. 481; *Werke* 20, pp. 388-9.
26. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 3, p. 525; *Werke* 20, p. 435.
27. *Science of Logic*, p. 27; *Werke* 5, p. 15.
28. *Science of Logic*, p. 27; *Werke* 5, p. 16.
29. A representative definition of these schools' view of philosophy is given by Ayer when he says that 'philosophy has to do with criteria. It is concerned with the standards which govern our use of concepts, our assessments of conduct, our methods of reasoning, our evaluations of evidence. One thing which it may do is to bring to light the criteria which we actually employ; another to adjudicate if they are found in conflict; another, perhaps, to criticize them and find better substitutes for them'. A. J. Ayer, *The Central Questions of Philosophy*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1978, p. 2.
30. *Science of Logic*, p. 27; *Werke* 5, p. 16. As Marcuse puts it: 'The striking difference between Hegel's *Logic* and the traditional logic has often been emphasized in the statement that Hegel replaced the formal by a material logic, repudiating the usual separation of the categories and forms of thought from their content'. H. Marcuse *Reason and Revolution*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1969, p. 121.
31. *Science of Logic*, p. 28; *Werke* 5, p. 17. 'The result of dialectic is positive, because it has a definite content, or because of certain specific propositions which are contained in the result - for the very reason that it is a resultant and not an immediate nothing.' *Hegel's Logic*, p. 119; *Werke* 8, pp. 176-7.
32. M. Rosen, *Hegel's Dialectic and its Criticism*, Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 32.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Science of Logic*, p. 28; *Werke* 5, p. 17: A given particular is not subsumed under this universal but in this determining, this positing of a difference, and the resolving of it, the particular has at the same time already determined itself.
36. 'Here Hegel wishes to re-emphasize the point that objects of every sort can ultimately be credited with no content in their own individual right, and that such content as any object has consists in a role which it embodies, a role within some job or Project.' We cannot 'credit physical facts with any content in themselves apart from the

- role' they play 'in regard to underlying principles, and so, vice versa, with those underlying principles'. C. Elder, *Appropriating Hegel*, Aberdeen University Press, 1980, p. 28.
37. 'This surmounting of the object of consciousness is not to be taken one-sidedly to mean that the object showed itself as returning to the self, but is to be taken more definitely to mean not only that the object as such presented itself to the self as vanishing, but rather that it is the externalization of self-consciousness that posits the thinghood and that this externalization has not merely a negative but a positive meaning, a meaning which is not only for us or in itself, but for self-consciousness itself.' *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 479; *Werke* 3, p. 575.
 38. *Science of Logic*, p. 31; *Werke* 5, p. 20.
 39. *Ibid.*
 40. *Science of Logic*, p. 31; *Werke* 5, p. 19.
 41. Marx to Engels, 16 January 1858. *Marx-Engels Werke*. Vol. 29, p. 260; *Collected Works*, Vol. 40, p. 249.
 42. T. Carver, 'Marx and Hegel's Logic', *Political Science*, XXXIV, 1, p. 68.
 43. *Science of Logic*, p. 32; *Werke* 5, p. 20: 'Into all that becomes something inward for men, an image or conception as such, into all that he makes his own, language has penetrated, and everything that he has transformed into language and expresses in it contains a category – concealed, mixed with other forms or clearly determined as such, so much is logic his natural element, indeed his own peculiar nature. If nature as such, as the physical world, is contrasted with the spiritual sphere, then logic must be said to be the supernatural element which permeates every relationship of men to nature, his sensation, intuition, desire, need, instinct, and simply by doing so transforms it into something human, even though only formally human, into ideas and purposes.
 44. *Science of Logic*, p. 32; *Werke* 5, p. 20.
 45. *Science of Logic*, p. 33; *Werke* 5, p. 22. Cf. *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 18; *Werke* 3, p. 35. As M. Rosen points out: 'The contrast between the *Bekannte* and the *Erkannte* . . . is the contrast between natural thought, which has attained science in the form of *Vorstellung*, and true science. But this suggests that the task of knowing what we are acquainted with is a task which cannot be carried out except as part of the transition from science in the form of *Vorstellung* to pure Science'. *Hegel's Dialectic and its Criticism*, pp. 55–6. I deal with this issue in detail in Chapter 5.
 46. *Science of Logic*, p. 36; *Werke* 5, p. 26.
 47. The absolute idea which represents the final stage in the development of Hegel's *Logic* is, 'in the first place, the unity of the theoretical and practical idea, and thus at the same time the unity of the idea of life with the idea of cognition'. *Hegel's Logic*, para 236A, p. 292; *Werke* 8, p. 388. This is, of course, in sharp contrast to Kant's position. He unites practical and theoretical reason only outside the realm of cognition. See L. W. Beck, *Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical*

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- Reason, University of Chicago Press, 1960, p. 48 and H. Williams, *Kant's Political Philosophy*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1983, pp. 38–9.
48. *Science of Logic*, p. 36; *Werke* 5, p. 26.
 49. *Science of Logic*, p. 37; *Werke* 5, p. 27.
 50. *Science of Logic*, p. 37; *Werke* 5, p. 27.
 51. *Science of Logic*, p. 38; *Werke* 5, p. 28.
 52. M. R. Cohen and E. Nagel, *An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1949, p. 8.
 53. Cohen and Nagel, *An Introduction to Logic*, p. 8.
 54. *Science of Logic*, p. 44; *Werke* 5, p. 36.
 55. *Hegel's Logic*, para 44, p. 72; *Werke* 8, pp. 120–1. See also *Hegel's Logic*, para 124, pp. 180–1; *Werke* 5, pp. 254–5.
 56. *Science of Logic*, p. 39; *Werke* 5, p. 29.
 57. 'Being, pure being, without any further determination. In its indeterminate immediacy it is equal only to itself. It is also not unequal relatively to another; it has no diversity within itself nor any with a reference outwards. It would not be held fast in its purity if it contained any determination or content which could be distinguished in or by which it could distinguished from an other. It is pure indeterminateness and emptiness. . . . Being, the indeterminate immediate, is in fact nothing, and neither more nor less than nothing.' *Science of Logic*, p. 82; *Werke* 5, p. 82–3.
 58. 'The title *Logic* is therefore very misleading if we have in mind the formal logic with which we are familiar. But in fact Hegel is using the title here in the sense of Kant's "transcendental logic".' C. Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 226. Cf. James E. Griffiss, 'The Kantian Background of Hegel's *Logic*', *New Scholasticism*, Vol. 43, 1969, pp. 514–15: 'Kant's conception of logic . . . raises the question, which was to become essential to Hegel, of the relationship through the categories of form to matter, or method to content'. But 'there must remain for Kant an irreducible and irrational given which is outside the rational structure of mind and unapproachable by it. The task for Hegel, then, is to find in the knowing subject itself an originaive source of all reality in which the dualism of subject and object can be overcome and the irrational given brought within the system of rational activity'.
 59. It may be said of universal history, that it is the exhibition of spirit in the process of working out the knowledge of that which it is potentially. And as the germ bears in itself the whole nature of the tree, and the taste and form of its fruits, so do the first traces of spirit virtually contain the whole of that history.' *Philosophy of History*, Dover Publications, New York, 1956, pp. 17–18; *Werke* 12, p. 31.
 60. *Science of Logic*, p. 49; *Werke* 5, pp. 41–2.
 61. *Science of Logic*, p. 49; *Werke* 5, p. 43.
 62. 'The reactive imagination is the centre in which the universal and being, one's own and what's picked up, internal and external, are completely welded into one.' *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, Part Three of the *Encyclopaedia*, tr. W. Wallace, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1972, para 457, p. 211; *Werke* 10, p. 268.

63. *Science of Logic*, p. 593; *Werke* 6, pp. 265–6.
64. *Science of Logic*, p. 595; *Werke* 6, p. 268.
65. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 38, *Werke* 3, p. 59: 'Formally, what has been said can be expressed thus: the general nature of the judgement or proposition, which involves the distinction of subject and predicate, is destroyed by the speculative proposition, and the proposition of identity which the former becomes contains the counter-thrust against the subject-predicate relationship.' Cf. H. Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1969, pp. 101–2: 'The speculative judgement does not have a stable and passive subject. Its subject is active and develops itself into its predicates. The predicates are various forms of the subject's existence . . . The focus of truth is not the proposition, but the dynamic system of speculative judgements in which every single judgement must be 'sublated' by another, so that only the whole process represents the truth.'
66. *Science of Logic*, p. 662; *Werke* 6, p. 349.
67. For a technical discussion of why Hegel rejects the Kantian theory of judgement see R. E. Aquila, 'Predication and Hegel's Metaphysics', *Kant – Studien*, Vol. 64, (1973), pp. 231–45, reprinted in *Hegel*, ed. M. Inwood, Oxford University Press, 1985, pp. 67–84. It is interesting that Aquila should stress that for Hegel 'bare individuals are unthinkable and hence unreal'. *Hegel*, ed. M. Inwood, p. 76.
68. Kant's position is well summed up by Roger Scruton when he says: 'The perception of "purposiveness", like the regulative ideas of reason, is not a perception of what is, but a perception "as if"'. However, it is an inescapable "as if": we *must* see the world in this way if we are to find our proper place in it, both as knowing and acting creatures. Aesthetic judgement, which delivers to us the pure experience of design in nature, frees us both for theoretical insight and for the endeavours of the moral life. It also permits the transition from the theoretical to the practical: finding design in nature, we recognize that our own ends might be enacted there.' *Kant*, Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 88.

3

Dialectical Logic I

Logic and ontology

An ontology is a theory of being. Ontology therefore represents a fundamental enquiry into the nature of everything that is. Ontology is sometimes used interchangeably with the term metaphysics. But, strictly speaking, metaphysics is a wider enquiry than ontology since it deals both with the ultimate nature of things and the theory of knowledge. Metaphysics is equivalent with all branches of philosophy and is occasionally regarded as synonymous with philosophy itself. Hegel would be sympathetic to this view since his purpose is to unite logic, the theory of knowledge and ontology into one systematic metaphysics. He is one of the last great philosophers to undertake such a daunting task.

For the most part, Hegel regards his dialectical logic not as an alternative to formal or Aristotelian logic but as a valuable addition to it.¹ Formal logic makes an important contribution to our knowledge by isolating and developing the generally established positions of rigorous human thought but, in Hegel's view, it does not go far enough. The formal logician insistently abjures the one thing which is of crucial interest, namely, the matter of conveying the truth about our experience. Hegel sees his dialectical logic as addressing itself to this issue by not only showing what constitutes a valid argument but also what constitutes a valid argument about our experience. Hegel sees his dialectical logic as not only dealing with the form of our knowledge but its content as well.

Hegel is, I believe, to be congratulated for trying to develop a concrete type of logic and so complete the enterprise begun by Kant in his transcendental logic. Here I shall try to bring out what was valid and useful in this attempt, since this concrete logic is an essential step towards Marx's logic of the concrete in *Capital*. For Hegel developing a concrete form of logic represented less of a

problem than it might for many others because he ultimately saw no divergence between thinking and the experience it was designed to report. In Hegel's view the great virtue of philosophical thought is that it can wholly encapsulate our experience. This is a point on which he differs markedly from Kant.² The importance of distinguishing between thought processes and the processes in the world which they are intended to describe cannot be overestimated. As Kant stresses, form and content have always to be distinguished. Hegel distinguishes between the two only to show they are one.

Hegel would not be happy for his chain of reasoning in the *Logic* to be seen separately from its content because of its ontological implications. In the *Logic* he sees himself as not only unfolding an argument but the nature of being itself.³ Hegel's *Logic* should not, however, be seen as he himself views it – as the development of actuality itself – but as a way of trying to explain how experience is constituted. Without accepting it in its entirety, there is much to be said for Hegel's logic as a systematic account of our experience. Hegel at least focuses upon those concepts, such as being, nothing, quantity and quality which are fundamental in giving to us our world. The ability to make use of such concepts is essential to our experiencing the world in a coherent way. But these concepts do not themselves, as Hegel believes, wholly constitute the world.

The structure of Hegel's *Logic* has much to do with the way in which he sees concepts as originating and creating our experience. Beginning with Being in the objective logic and passing through such categories as quality, quantity, essence, appearance and actuality the *Logic* takes us through the inanimate and animate world to the realm of human consciousness and activity in the subjective logic. Hegel sees as a totality the world of our natural experience and the world of our purposeful, conscious experience. Concepts (and finally ideas) provide the tools through which this complete experience is woven. And because nature and human subjectivity are seen in continuity Hegel does not mark off the techniques of argument we have devised to understand our environment and each other's actions from our more basic conceptual armoury through which we first become conscious of our existence and environment. Concepts such as quantity and quality are seen in continuity with the propositional

structures of formal logic. All the major concepts of the *Logic* are seen as an attempt to come to grips with a reality which is ultimately spiritual in form. Because reality finally boils down to spirit Hegel thinks the categories which make it possible may be presented in a hierarchical form, with those that are nearest to spirit coming last and representing higher forms of knowledge and comprehension. However, this hierarchical ordering is as problematic as the submission that reality is ultimately thought. Types of knowledge and forms of argument may be fuller and more convincing than one another, but this does not necessarily make one *better* than the other. Indeed, there can be no such thing as better or superior forms of knowledge. If they are all knowledge they must enjoy an equal status.

Hegel regards the contribution that his *Logic* can make to the education and culture of society as similar to the contribution that the teaching of grammar makes towards the learning or teaching of a language. For the student who is unfamiliar with philosophy or the natural sciences his *Logic* will appear to be a dull and unexciting glossary of external forms. All that the novice will see in the *Logic* are the categories, propositional forms and an attempt at synthesis. However, for the student who has partly mastered philosophy or one of the sciences the *Logic* – just as would a grammar for an individual who has already learnt a language – takes on an entirely different shape. The same categories and patterns of thought which previously had assumed an uninformative and dry appearance now take on, in Hegel's words, 'a substantial living value'⁴. Just as grammar illuminates a language that is already mastered and makes new languages easier to learn, so an understanding of logic, both formal and dialectical – gives the individual a more profound understanding of the knowledge he has already in his grasp, and a new and greater capacity to tackle other fields of knowledge. For example, the person who has a knowledge of physics or mathematics will know how the concept of measure operates in practice. What the *Logic* provides, in Hegel's view, is a theoretical comprehension of the concept which not only clarifies its role in practice but also illuminates its general position in the sciences and everyday life.⁵

Hegel objects to stating in a preliminary way what the main sections and sub-section of his *Logic* are.⁶ He says that any such division can only be provisional. He takes this view because he

sees logic as an interconnected whole where section headings do not so much mark separate parts of the subject, as, rather, mark separate stages in the *one* argument. Hegel also feels that the usual exponent of logic uses such a preliminary division of the subject matter to avoid all the more awkward questions with which logic has to deal. The division of the subject matter must be shown to arise from the subject matter itself. This is, as we shall see, a pattern followed by Marx in *Capital*. The ordinary logician (in one respect quite understandably) divides up his task to lighten his load, arbitrarily beginning with what most strikes his interest. But this will not do for Hegel because logic, for him, has no less a task than the rational depiction of objective reality. This is why he makes his beginning with objective logic which he sees as taking the place of what was previously called metaphysics.⁷ The examination of the fundamental nature of reality is the proper point at which to begin logic.

Objective logic is for Hegel by its very nature ontology. Earlier metaphysicians like Spinoza, Leibniz and Wolff had tried to construct valid ontologies which demonstrated in thought form the systematic structure of experience and being. Hegel's objection to the systems of these earlier metaphysicians was that they proceeded from a small number of dogmatically stated axioms. Spinoza, for instance, defines God as substance and then goes on to identify substance in its two attributes of extension and thought with reality. This will not do for Hegel.⁸ Being for Hegel has to be deduced from its concept and should not merely be presumed to take on such and such a form. Hegel is, in particular, not happy with the way his metaphysician forerunners simply identify being with God. He argues that the ideal nature of our experience has to be proved, and this is a task he gladly undertakes in his *Logic*.

Hegel's objective logic is, then, supposed to be both a criticism of previous metaphysics and a deduction of reality. The objective logic takes us, therefore, to the core of Hegel's philosophy. Previous philosophers had made the error of separating the deduction of being from the deduction of the categories of logic. Hegel revives Aristotle's project in the *Metaphysics* of explaining the true nature of 'substance' but in unity with, rather, than separately from, logic.⁹ Aristotle overlooks his own concrete logic by dealing with form and content separately. Hegel thinks both

should be examined simultaneously since, properly conceived, they represent aspects of the one problem. The categories of the objective logic are not, Hegel thinks, simply the thought of being (or the essence of existence) they are being in its fullest and most comprehensive form. The world has, in Hegel's opinion, to be regarded as a logic not merely because it is inherently logical but, rather, because the only way that it can be said to truly exist is as an interrelated series of categories. This is the sense in which Hegel makes his famous claim in the Preface to the *Philosophy of Right* that 'what is rational is real and what is real is rational'.¹⁰ For something to be, in Hegel's view, presupposes that it has an intellectual coherence. As Findlay puts it, when speaking of Hegel's *Logic*:

Hegel draws no distinction between the subjective acts by which entities are brought to mind, and the entities which exist independently of such acts. The thought determinations and categories of Hegel have no subsistence *apart* from the life of thinking and self-conscious spirit'.¹¹

Hegel takes the conditions for the reality (which subsumes its existence) of an object to be the same as the conditions for our knowledge of it. So, in his view, there is nothing we can truly be said to have experienced that we cannot fully comprehend. Thus, in describing the second volume of his *Logic* as the subjective logic Hegel does not intend to contrast unfavourably the knowledge provided by subjective logic with the knowledge provided by objective logic. Subjective logic he sees, rather, as subjective in the sense that it is the stage in the unfolding of reality in which we become conscious of the involvement of our own thinking in the reality we depict. In the second volume of the *Logic* the categories of logic become what they have been implicitly all along: the expression of human self-consciousness and the self-consciousness of spirit.¹²

A condition for knowing the world is, of course, that it is potentially comprehensible. Normally also we take it that it can be comprehensible only for the human subject. But this does not mean it must always be comprehensible. We often encounter things in our experience we cannot fully understand. Not every experience can be reduced to the thought of that experience. Indeed, the thought of an experience can wholly alter what is

experienced. Happiness reflected upon is not the same as the happiness we spontaneously experience. Hegel's suggestion that because we find something comprehensible it is, therefore, necessarily rational is also a dubious one. Just as there is much we experience we cannot comprehend, there is also much we comprehend which we do not always find rational. Thus, whereas Hegel favours an ontology which is developmental (evolutionary) and rationally bounded, there is probably more to be said for an ontology which is also developmental (evolutionary) but is not of necessity rationally bounded. Contingency and chance are not merely subordinate parts of our experience, they enjoy an equal place with order and purpose. For Hegel we know what being is because it has been revealed to us in our knowledge of spirit, but in my view we are always learning more and more about the nature of being. Being is not given to us by spirit, we discover it for ourselves. History – in its widest sense – is the story of this unending process of discovery.

'The laws of thought'

One of the main objectives of formal logic is to discover and present what are held to be the procedures followed in a valid process of reasoning. Formal logicians regard themselves as having developed a discipline in which 'results, once established, seem to remain forever accepted as correct'.¹³ Although less prepared nowadays to speak in terms of the 'laws of thought' that this discipline has established, logicians, none the less, think of themselves as developing and defending rules that are the very foundation of our reasoning capacities. Hegel is very much aware of the efforts of logicians in this direction, but he is not, on the whole, impressed by their achievements. His criticism of formal logicians is not that they are wholly wrong in the rules they defend, but rather that the rules they defend so vigorously are not as important as they suppose.

In an article on 'Hegel and Contemporary Logic' in *Soviet Studies in Philosophy* I. S. Narski argues that Hegel at various stages in his philosophy offers differing evaluations of formal logic. 'In some cases he treats it as an alternative to dialectical logic and even as its metaphysical enemy.'¹⁴ Hegel creates this

impression particularly when he is attacking the empiricist frame of mind which occasionally goes hand in hand with the advocacy of formal logic. In other cases Hegel gives the impression, as Narski points out, that he sees formal logic as a 'lower stage of contemporary cognition – useful in school, in the home and the special sciences'. And it is true that Hegel identifies formal logic with the working of the understanding which seeks to classify, define and isolate. Such skills are clearly invaluable in any walk of life. But at another level Hegel, Narski continues, 'treats formal logic as a historically justified but outdated preparation for dialectics'.¹⁵ This again rings true but none of this runs counter to what Narski regards as Hegel's most convincing position, namely, that formal logic 'remains in force in its entirety and operates throughout the process of theoretical (dialectical) thought'.¹⁶ Whatever his strictures on formal logic Hegel is fully conscious that he could not get along without it.

Hegel has three interconnected complaints about the way in which the laws of thought (or 'the determinations of reflection') are presented in ordinary logic. Firstly, he thinks that these supposed laws of thought are presented in too abstract a way for propositions which are supposed to be eternally and everywhere valid. The laws of thought, such as that of identity and the law of the excluded middle, are usually presented in a notational form. The ordinary logician argues that it is a prerequisite of rational thought that things remain self-identical and they express this usually by saying that A must be equal to A or $X=X$. Hegel, however, thinks that if this law is supposed to hold for everything why cannot the proposition be expressed in a form that brings in the facts of our experience? In Hegel's view, the reason that these laws are not referred to our experience is that this would immediately demonstrate their inadequacy.¹⁷ The truth is that in our experience of the world the identity of a thing is not solely expressed through identity, but also through difference. 'A determinateness of being is,' Hegel says, 'essentially a transition into its opposite; the negative of any determinateness is as necessary as the latter itself; as immediate determinateness, each is directly confronted by the other'.¹⁸ A pig identifies itself as a pig just as much by rejecting those characteristics which would prevent it from being a pig (e.g., cleanliness) as by exhibiting those characteristics which make it a pig (ie., dirtiness). The

positive character 'dirtiness' requires the existence of the negative character 'cleanliness' in order that it can be attributed to the pig. We can recognize dirtiness only through its contrast with its opposite, cleanliness. The laws of thought, such as this law of identity have to be expressed in an abstract way in logic because when translated to reality they fail properly to convey what they claim to convey. They tell us nothing of the world and remain true because they are couched at a level of total abstract generality. As Taylor aptly puts it in his monumental work on Hegel:

The whole Hegelian message is that 'form', or the nature of thought itself, goes over into its opposite. Concepts reveal on examination inner contradictions; as universals they show themselves necessarily related to particulars which nevertheless negate them. And in showing these inner contradictory relations they are really showing forth the nature of things, for our concepts behave like this because they are the vehicles of the self-consciousness of the inner necessity of the cosmos.¹⁹

By sticking to abstract rules of thought formal logic can never depict what is true about the world.

Hegel's second objection to the usual presentation of the laws of thought flows from this conclusion. The formal logician defends the validity of the laws of thought by arguing that they should not be taken as applying to anything in particular. But Hegel fails to understand why these laws should have gained such prominence in logic if they are not to be taken as *applying* to anything.²⁰ They are formulated, it seems, at too abstract a level to contribute anything to our thought. In the third place the fact that the determinations of reflection are dealt with merely as abstract propositional forms of logic leads to their dependence on one another being ignored. In Hegel's view the idea of identity makes little sense without its being related to the ideas of difference and contradiction, the other determinations of reflection. Indeed, in his view, 'the several propositions which are set up as absolute laws of thought are . . . more closely considered opposed to one another, they contradict one another and mutually suspend themselves'.²¹ Thus, the formal correctness of the age-old laws of thought belies a concrete divergence and conflict in what they purport to prove. Just as Hegel in the *Logic* refuses to see the laws of thought in isolation from each other so Marx later refuses to see the laws of political economy in isolation from each other.

Identity

Genuine identity is, Hegel thinks, unity which is expressed through difference. Something is self-identical through holding together its many various properties. These properties are often as contrary to each other as they are compatible with each other. In Hegel's terms, *negativity* is an essential aspect of identity, namely, that the identity of a thing becomes apparent through its rejection of the 'other' of itself. As R. W. Mulligan notes, 'in no other modern philosophy does negativity play the critical role that it plays in the philosophy of Hegel'. Hegel 'insists that negation is equally as important as affirmation' as 'the very possibility of negation . . . presupposes some knowledge as having being achieved, because one cannot deny that a predicate belongs to a subject unless he knows of some positive attribute of the subject which excludes the predication in question'.²² But this reliance on the other is ultimately the undoing of identity.

This complex, paradoxical view of 'genuine' identity Hegel contrasts with the kind of identity which is generally stressed in formal logic. This kind of identity is one which simply stresses the self-equality and internal consistency of a thing. It is the kind of identity which is encapsulated in the formula A is A or $A=A$. *Abstract* identity of this kind Hegel associates with an 'external' style of thought. In this style of thinking our reason is seen as no more than 'a loom on which it externally combines and interweaves the warp, of say, identity, and then the woof of difference'.²³

For Hegel this kind of thinking represents no more than a kind of mental exercise which, whilst admittedly sharpening our reasoning faculties, gets us no nearer a clear comprehension of our experience. Moreover identity is a much more complex category than is first realized. The formal logician feels that he has said all there is to say when he presents the formula that something must be either 'a or non-a', but applied to our experience this simply gives us informationless tautologies such as 'a tree is a tree' or 'an apple is an apple'. Such claims are no doubt true, but we do not in fact establish the identity of a thing in experience by such devices. In establishing the identity of an apple we refer to its properties, which make sense to us only through comparison and contrast with the properties of other objects. For instance, we

would begin to identify an apple for those who might (perhaps from another planet) not have experienced one by saying it is a spherical object, grows on trees, is sometimes edible, etc. All these references take us beyond the immediate object and, therefore, beyond a merely abstract identity. This is, as we shall see, the pattern that Marx's analysis of the commodity follows in *Capital*, the properties he discovers lead him well beyond the object itself to a discussion of such categories as money and labour time.

But Hegel's analysis of identity fails to distinguish sufficiently between the kind of 'concrete' identity, i.e., identity in the real world, that he is talking about and the formal identity of the logician. He is, of course, highly critical of the 'abstract' identity of formal logic, but in seeing his view of identity as an adequate replacement for the view of identity of the logician he steps beyond what is merited by his argument. Hegel is unprepared to accept that what he is dealing with are simply two distinct accounts of identity, which deal with our experience in distinct and not always competing ways. Underlying the concrete or dialectical view of identity must always be the formal view that an object, say a tree, is always the one object although its nature or concrete identity is established and maintained through a myriad variety of contrasts to and comparisons with other objects and events and, indeed, extensive changes in its own physical or social form. But this is a point Hegel chooses not to bring out. Whereas elsewhere he is prepared to accept the validity of formal logic, here he stresses, rather, the way in which his concrete conception of identity undermines the simple, unchanged view of identity and negates the object. This is an instance of formal logic being treated, in Narski's words, as dialectical logic's 'metaphysical enemy'.²⁴ Hegel does this for *idealist* purposes. He sees his account of identity as establishing the falsity of a materialist account of experience which regards objects as having an existence independent of thought. This is why Hegel argues that genuine identity 'instead of being the unmoved simple . . . is the passage beyond itself into the dissolution of itself'.²⁵

This conclusion is wholly unconvincing. To say that identifying an object in our experience is far more complex and various a process than simply maintaining the lifeless formula of the logician, that whatever an object is it can only be that object, is not to

say that the logician's premise is totally wrong. As Hegel himself admits elsewhere, the proposition is not wrong: it simply fails to add a great deal to our knowledge of the object. But if Hegel admits this much he cannot then go on to argue that logical identity is 'dissolved' in the concrete notion of identity. Rather, what happens is that logical identity is shown to be incomplete, there is something wholly self-identical to which it refers, but this self-identity makes itself felt through opposites and contraries. But for Hegel the fact that a thing establishes its identity through other things means that the independent existence of that thing is destroyed. However there is no truth to this assertion. To establish the interdependence in our thought of the properties of objects leaves the independent existence of those objects totally unaffected.

For Hegel the conception of identity 'passes over' into the conception of difference. Identity, in other words, becomes difference. Hegel means this both in a sense which is persuasive and in a sense which is unacceptable. Hegel's suggestion is perfectly acceptable in so far as he is saying that the conceptions of identity and difference are necessarily interrelated and they cannot be used in argument without implying each other. However, in so far as Hegel uses the term 'passing over' to suggest that the things we describe lose their identity and actually become different through this process of argument his views are implausible. No doubt our conceptual world and our everyday world, of experience are related, but this is not the nature of that relationship. Hegel's *Logic* confuses changes in what objects are for us (both as observers and participants) with changes in those objects themselves. In Sartre's terms, being for itself is confused with being in itself.

Contradiction

Hegel's interpretation of contradiction takes us to the heart of his dialectical (and ontological) view of logic. In his view it should be 'enunciated as a law that everything is inherently contradictory'.²⁶ Contradiction cannot only be predicated of an argument or a process of thought it can also be predicated of reality. The idea of contradiction has both a logical and ontologi-

cal significance. The idea depicts the truth about the 'finite things of being', namely, that they are inherently self-contradictory and so show themselves to be infinite. If we comprehend reality properly, Hegel thinks, we must see that it establishes the truth of philosophical idealism. In his chapter on finitude and infinitude in the *Science of Logic* Hegel says, 'the proposition that the finite as ideal constitutes idealism. The idealism of philosophy consists in nothing else than in recognizing that the finite has no true being'.²⁷

Despite the reservations which may be expressed about Hegel's idealism and his attempt to fuse ontology with logic, Hegel's account of contradiction in his *Science of Logic* must be seen as containing some of the finest passages in his work. He is most scathing about traditional logic and common-sense thinking. The failure to come to terms with contradiction represents, in his view, a lack of both philosophical and moral courage: 'It is,' he says, 'one of the fundamental prejudices of logic as hitherto understood and of ordinary thinking, that contradiction is not so characteristically essential and immanent a determination as identity; but in fact, if it were a question of grading the two determinations and they had to be kept separate, then contradiction would have to be taken as the profounder determination and more characteristic of essence. For as against contradiction, identity is merely the determination of the simple immediate, of dead being; but contradiction is the root of all movement and vitality; it is only in so far as something has a contradiction within it that it moves, has an urge and activity.'²⁸

Hegel's greatest objection to the treatment of contradiction by traditional logic and ordinary thought is that it is 'kept aloof from things'.²⁹ But in thinking contradiction, in Hegel's view, we are thinking in the most concrete way possible. To suppose that nothing is contradictory, and that it is our thinking that imports contradiction into things demeans our reasoning faculties. 'Intelligent reflection . . . consists, on the contrary, in grasping and asserting contradiction'.³⁰ This is, of course, a conclusion which Marx wholeheartedly affirms.

It is interesting, in the light of our earlier discussion of Heraclitus, that Hegel takes as his example of intelligent reflection, thinking which holds on to contradiction (and does not allow it to dominate it), the correct understanding of motion. Seen

dialectically all motion is, as the Eleatic philosophers had pointed out, in fact a contradiction through which an object both is and is not in one and the same place.³¹ 'Something moves', Hegel says, 'not because at one moment it is here and at another there, but because at one and the same moment it is here and not here, because in this "here", it at once is and is not'.³² Anything that lives is, in Hegel's view, subject always to contradiction. Indeed, he is prepared to put it more strongly than that and say that a thing lives only so long as it has the power 'to hold and endure the contradiction within it'.³³ Thus, Hegel sees his logic as having a positive dimension not only in providing a deeper comprehension of philosophical thinking, but also in providing a more profound moral understanding of experience. The rational and moral person is one who faces up to the contradictory nature of our lives. Hegel sums up his feelings on the matter when he says in an addition to paragraph 119 in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*: 'Contradiction is the very moving principle of the world: and it is ridiculous to say contradiction is unthinkable'.³⁴

It is true that contradiction appears wholly bound up with human experience. There is no one – even the most contented – who would claim that their experience is entirely unproblematic. At each stage in individual or social development choices arise and decisions are made which involve loss as well as gain. There is a great deal to be said for referring to this perplexing and dilemma-ridden aspect of our experience as 'contradictory'. Difficulties with Hegel's *Logic* arise, however, when he goes on to argue that it is not only our experience which is contradictory, but the *things* which inhabit it as well. However the things that inhabit our experience are inherently *innocent*. Outside human society and discourse the properties of things have no epistemological significance. They become contradictory only when brought into the purview of human thinking, purposes and action. As Shakespeare aptly puts it in *Hamlet*: 'Nothing is good or evil, but thinking makes it so'. No doubt things in their absolute innocence betray certain primary characteristics that any disembodied mind might observe or note, but once the question of the interrelating of those characteristics is raised the manner in which they are evaluated cannot be seen as something which pertains solely to the thing. Hegel appears to confuse the comprehension of a thing with that thing, but knowledge is always of

something and not that thing itself. Thus, Hegel's talk of contradictions becomes intelligible only if we regard him as speaking of things as they are experienced by the human individual. And here I would stress his dialectical view that all we experience has its incomplete and problematic side and it is, therefore, if one likes, contradictory.

Jon Elster in his book *Logic and Society* has looked at the question of under what circumstances it makes sense to talk about contradictions in our experience. He does so in the light of his analysis of Hegel's theory of contradictions. He notes how important is the idea of motion to Hegel's theory and comments on Hegel's indebtedness to Zeno's paradoxes.³⁵ It is Hegel's appreciation of change that seems to lie at the root of his theory of contradiction. Motion, as Elster points out, represents the paradigm case. Elster rejects, as I have done, the view that there 'are contradictions in reality'. He does so on grounds he adduces from Karl Popper's essay 'What is dialectic?'.³⁶ Popper's criticism appears to be that if we admit contradictory statements about the world then any theory whatsoever is admissible. A theory, he argues, which 'adds to every information which it asserts also the negation of this information can give us no information at all'.³⁷ Elster diverges from Popper, however, in admitting the possibility of plausible theories which ascribe contradictory features to the world. He is at one with Popper in thinking that contradictory arguments do not make for consistent theories but, on the other hand, he takes the view that 'there are situations in reality that can only be described by means of the concept of a logical contradiction'.³⁸

This is an interesting conclusion. Elster rules out the possibility of talking sensibly about 'contradictions in reality' and dismisses the idea that 'adequate descriptions of reality must contain self-contradictory propositions'.³⁹ None the less, he still thinks it possible to speak cogently about 'real contradictions'. I would agree with Elster that we can observe events and situations which can be described as logically contradictory – as when politicians arm for war whilst calling for peace. However, this assertion implies nothing final about any supposed reality beyond appearance, nor does it commit us to expressing our ideas in a contradictory way. Popper, however, seems to identify dialectic wrongly with this second position. Dialectical logic, in his view, represents

the complete rejection of formal logic. Popper sees Hegel as discarding the law of contradiction and so as running contrary to all the reasoning of modern science.⁴⁰ But, as Elster's contribution shows, Popper's criticism misses the mark. Not only does Hegel accept the formal implications of the law of contradiction but also his account of contradiction as concretely experienced can be taken to depend on the idea of a logical contradiction. Although Hegel gives an ontological gloss to his interpretation of a (dialectical) contradiction it is possible to glean from it a useful methodological generalization about how best to understand our experience. Real contradictions do arise in our experience. This is particularly the case in social life, where it is possible to observe contradictory desires, purposes and beliefs.

One common contradiction Elster thinks to be found in social life is what he calls the 'fallacy of composition'.⁴¹ By this Elster means that from the premisses that a certain course of action is open to one individual in a class or category it is falsely assumed that the course of action is open to all individuals in that class or category. For instance, because it is always possible for some of the unemployed to find work many have been led to believe that all the unemployed can obtain work. This is a logically contradictory belief, but none the less it is a belief often enough held, arising just as much from the different circumstances in which individuals find themselves as from their inability to think logically. It is in this sense Elster would argue that Marx is receptive to Hegel's account of contradiction.⁴² Circumstances lead individuals to perceptions of the world which, though logically contradictory, are none the less real. As we shall see, this insight is fundamental to Marx's account of commodity fetishism.

The law of the excluded middle

According to the law of the excluded middle, which was first formulated by Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*: 'There can be no intermediate between contradictions, any given predicate must be either affirmed or denied of one subject'.⁴³ In other words, Aristotle argues that something can either be said to possess or not possess a certain attribute. There is no middle between these two terms. This is a problem we have discussed in the chapter on

Heraclitus. There we concluded that Aristotle could not have the argument all his own way. The good sense of Aristotle's suggestion is obvious. When we say that an object possesses a certain property we usually want at the same time to imply that it does not possess the opposite property. The fixity and stability of what we are describing would be subverted if it were possible to assert opposed things. Formal logicians stress this fixed view of our experience when they maintain that what is not true of an object cannot also be true of it. But this, though undoubtedly correct to Hegel 'is a triviality leading nowhere'.⁴⁴ A more profound and valuable way of understanding the law of the excluded middle is to see it as demonstrating that 'everything is an opposite, is determined as either positive or negative'.⁴⁵

Hegel says this because he believes that a careful analysis of the terms of the positive and negative shows that they are mutually related and dependent terms which cannot be seen in an isolated and exclusive sense. The propositions 'this is A', and 'this is not A' make sense only in relation to one another. The two propositions that the law of the excluded middle strives to distinguish and keep apart are, therefore, found to be an inseparable pair.

Hegel finds the usual treatment of the positive and negative in our ordinary thinking to be entirely lacking in perception and sensitivity.

The opposition between the positive and the negative is taken strictly in the sense that the former . . . is supposed to be objective and the latter subjective which stems only from an external reflection and is no concern of the objective, which exists in and for itself and for which the subjective does not exist at all.⁴⁶

In the ordinary grasp of the terms all truth is taken to lie on the positive side and untruth is taken to be on the negative side. Just as when we hear of a riot our first response is to blame the undisciplined, unlawful mob and to praise the disciplined, lawful action of the police in suppressing the riot. But such unreflective thinking overlooks the way in which opposites form a unity; as Heraclitus points out there is no light without darkness, no good without evil and no justice without conflict, and no truth without falsity. It ought, in Hegel's view to be:

A simple consideration that, in the first place, the positive is not an immediately identical, but on the one hand is an opposite to a

negative, having meaning only in this relation, so that the negative is contained in its own concept . . . Similarly, the negative which stands over against the positive, has meaning only in relation to its other.⁴⁷

There is, therefore, no positive without the negative, just as there is no negative without the positive. The terms are brought together by their opposition. The idea of rioting presupposes the idea of law enforcement, just as the idea of law enforcement presupposes forms of law-breaking of which rioting is one.

Hegel's understanding of the interrelatedness of the positive and the negative leads him to the view that there is a possible third too in the law of the excluded middle. The law argues in the propositional form that there is nothing which is at once A and not-A. Hegel claims, that, on the contrary, there is something which is neither the first positive A nor the second negative A, and that is A itself. Hegel, therefore argues that the law of the excluded middle when seen dialectically can be said to contradict itself because there is something which is neither +A or -A and that is the something itself.⁴⁸ Thus, although something cannot be asserted of a subject and not asserted of it at one and the same time and in the same respect it is perfectly possible and indeed likely, that opposites can be attributed to something at different times and in different respects. As Elster again aptly puts it, ' "real contradictions" in this sense - are closely linked to processes of change; partly because they are themselves a variety of change and partly because they generate a movement of change in the direction of consistency'.⁴⁹

Hegel sums up his argument on the relation of the positive and negative well when he says in an addition to paragraph 119 of the *Encyclopaedia* version of the *Logic*:

Positive and negative are supposed to express an absolute difference. The two are however at the bottom the same: the name of either might be transferred to the other. Thus, for example, debts and assets are not two particular, self-subsisting species of property. What is negative to the debtor is positive to the creditor. A way to the east is also a way to the west. Positive and negative are therefore intrinsically contained by one another, and are only in relation to each other. The north pole of the magnet cannot be without the south pole and vice versa. If we cut the magnet in two, we have not a north pole in one piece, and a south pole in the other. Similarly, in electricity, the positive and the negative are not two diverse and

independent fluids. In opposition, the different is not confronted by simply *any* other, but by *its* other.⁵⁰

Because change is ubiquitous and contradictions are endemic in our experience of nature and society, the positive and negative do not simply coexist with one another they are always in conflict. The negative is not the only disruptive force. The positive, because it withstands the change the negative portends, also creates opposition. This is the line of analysis followed by Marx in his account of class structure in modern society. The bourgeoisie identify themselves as a class through their opposition to the working class, just as members of the working class identify themselves as belonging to one class in their conflict with the bourgeoisie.

Notes

1. 'Hegel is not simply some nineteenth-century German romantic listening to his own incantations of World spirit but a philosopher concerned with carefully working out the logical relations between all the different ways in which we experience things and talk about that experience. Nor is he the champion of those who would like to reject the principle of non-contradiction, as he is often supposed to be.' T. Pinkard, 'The Logic of Hegel's *Logic*' in Hegel, ed. M. Inwood, Oxford, 1985, p. 109. Reprinted from the *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 17, 1979, pp. 417–35.
2. For Kant there are 'two elements of our knowledge – that which is in our power (*Gewalt*) completely *a priori*, and that which is obtainable only *a posteriori* from experience.' *Critique of Pure Reason*, B871, A843.
3. 'Hegel makes clear in the introduction to the *Logic* that he is not treating concepts as they are normally treated, but rather in his sense, as straddling the opposition between subject and object.' C. Taylor, *Hegel*, Cambridge, 1975, p. 226.
4. *Science of Logic*, p. 57; *Werke* 5, p. 53.
5. 'Thus the value of logic is only appreciated when it is preceded by experience of the sciences; it then displays itself to mind as the universal truth, not as a particular knowledge alongside other matters and realities, but as the essential being of all these latter.' *Science of Logic*, p. 58; *Werke* 5, p. 54–5.
6. *Science of Logic*, p. 59; *Werke* 5, p. 56; 'The general division of it here can be given, as it were only in so far as the author is already familiar with the science.'
7. *Science of Logic*, p. 63; *Werke* 5, p. 61. Cf. *Hegel's Logic* tr. W. Wallace

Encyclopaedia, Vol. 1, (Oxford 1975); *Werke* 8, p. 81: 'Logic therefore coincides with Metaphysics, the science of things set and held in thoughts – thoughts which can be accredited with the ability to express the essentialities of things.'

8. Although Hegel thinks very highly of Spinoza's philosophy he thinks his notion of substance is too rigidly applied: 'As all differences and determinations of things and of consciousness simply go back into the one substance, one may say that in the system of Spinoza all things are merely cast down into this abyss of annihilation. . . . This philosophy has only a rigid and unyielding substance, and not yet spirit; in it we are not at home with ourselves.' *Lectures on the History of Philosophy III*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1968, p. 288; *Werke* 20, p. 166.
9. In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel says of Aristotle's logic: 'Like the whole of Aristotle's philosophy, his logic really requires recasting, so that all his determinations should be brought into a necessary systematic whole – not a systematic whole which is correctly divided into parts, and in which no part is forgotten, all being set forth in their proper order, but one in which there is one living organic whole, in which each is held to be a part, and the whole alone as such is held to be true.' *Lecture II*, p. 223; *Werke* 19, pp. 241–2. Cf. Francis O'Farrell, 'Aristotle's, Kant's and Hegel's Logic', *Gregorianum*, Vol. 54, 1973, pp. 477–8.
10. *Philosophy of Right*, tr. T. M. Knox, Oxford 1969, p. 10; *Werke* 7, p. 24.
11. J. N. Findlay, *Hegel: a Re-examination*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1958, p. 152.
12. C. Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 297: 'Having reached the subject, Hegel is now in a position to spell out what has only been implicit in the earlier books (of the *Logic*). We saw that the categories of essence as against those of being make implicit reference to a subject of knowledge. This reference is now made explicit. And this consciousness that the real is for a subject will no longer be lost sight of in the *Logic*.'
13. H. Putnam, *Philosophy of Logic*, Allen & Unwin, London 1972, pp. 4–5.
14. I. S. Narski, 'Hegel and Contemporary Logic', *Soviet Studies in Philosophy*, 9, Spring 1971, p. 358.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. Hegel gains support here from A. J. Ayer who says of the theory of identity, that the 'reasoning appears sound, but it leads to unacceptable consequences when we proceed to substitute values for the variables (x-y). That Dickens is Dickens may pass for a necessary proposition, at least under the presupposition that Dickens exists, though if anyone were actually to use these words it would more probably be as a means of saying that Dickens was a law into himself, or something of that sort, rather than just that he was self-identical . . . What of the proposition that the morning star is identical with the evening star and that both are identical with Venus? Surely it is a

contingent fact that one and the same planet is to be found at the places in question in the morning and at night. It has been claimed that these propositions are necessary, even though their truth has to be empirically discovered, but on any natural interpretation of them, it seems to me clear that this is wrong.' *The Central Questions of Philosophy*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1978, p. 197.

18. *Science of Logic*, p. 410; *Werke* 6, pp. 36–7.
19. C. Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 300.
20. S. Stebbing, *Introduction to Modern Logic*, Methuen, London 1933, pp. 469–70: 'But neither the traditional law of identity nor any principle of identity concerning the use of symbols has ever been interpreted in terms of applying to'.
21. *Science of Logic*, p. 411; *Werke* 6, p. 38.
22. R. W. Mulligan, 'A Note on Negativity', *New Scholasticism*, Vol. 33, 1959, p. 170.
23. *Science of Logic*, p. 412; *Werke* 6, p. 39.
24. See above p. 71.
25. *Science of Logic*, p. 415; *Werke* 6, p. 44.
26. *Science of Logic*, p. 439; *Werke* 6, p. 74.
27. *Science of Logic*, p. 154; *Werke* 5, p. 172.
28. *Science of Logic*, p. 439; *Werke* 6, p. 75.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Science of Logic*, p. 441; *Werke* 6, p. 78.
31. See above, ch. 1, pp. 6–8.
32. *Science of Logic*, p. 440; *Werke* 6, p. 76.
33. *Science of Logic*, p. 440; *Werke* 6, p. 76.
34. *Hegel's Logic*, p. 174; *Werke* 8, p. 247.
35. J. Elster, *Logic and Society*, Wiley, Chichester, 1978, p. 67.
36. Elster, *Logic and Society*, p. 68.
37. K. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969, p. 319. First published in *Mind*, Vol. 49, 1940. 'A theory which involves a contradiction is therefore entirely useless as a theory.'
38. Elster, *Logic and Society*, p. 70.
39. Elster, *Logic and Society*, p. 68.
40. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, p. 328.
41. Elster, *Logic and Society*, pp. 97–8. Elster suggests that this fallacy is 'of crucial importance for an understanding of the social sciences'. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
42. *Making Sense of Marx*, Cambridge 1985, pp. 43–8. Here Elster tries to establish '(i) that there is a pattern of argument that occurs frequently in Marx and that may well be referred to as a "theory of social contradictions", and (ii) that Marx himself occasionally, but far from invariably, uses the term "contradiction" when engaged in such argument. . . . The general idea that unintended consequences arise when agents entertain beliefs about each other that exemplify the fallacy of composition is an extremely powerful one'. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
43. *Metaphysics*, Book I, ch. 7.
44. *Science of Logic*, p. 438; *Werke* 6, p. 73.

45. *Science of Logic*, p. 438; *Werke* 6, p. 73: 'An important proposition, which has its necessity in the fact that identity passes over into difference, and this into opposition. Only it is usually not understood in this sense, but usually means nothing more than that, of all predicates, either this particular predicate or its non-being belongs to a thing'.
46. *Science of Logic*, p. 436, *Werke* 6, p. 71.
47. *Science of Logic*, p. 436; *Werke* 6, p. 70.
48. *Science of Logic*, pp. 438-9; *Werke* 6, p. 74.
49. J. Elster, *Logic and Society*, p. 70.
50. *Hegel's Logic*, p. 173; *Werke* 8, p. 245.

4

Dialectical Logic II

The transition from the objective logic to the subjective logic

Hegel sees all the categories of his *Science of Logic* as related to each other in a hierarchical way. In his view there is a dialectical movement from being to essence, from essence to actuality and, finally, from actuality to the absolute idea which it is the purpose of his *Logic* to trace. Hegel's emphasis on this hierarchical ordering puts too much stress on his argument and this along with his (of course connected) philosophical idealism makes his undertaking as a whole flawed. But, as I have suggested before, there is a great deal to be said for Hegel's attempt to see our categories as fundamentally interrelated and helping us, in the cognitive sense, to create our world. He carries out with greater fruitfulness Kant's project in the transcendental logic.¹ The way in which Hegel portrays the transitions from one to the other of his important categories is particularly instructive in understanding his dialectical method, none more so than the transition from the objective to the subjective logic. This is, moreover, Marx's way of developing his argument in *Capital*. We need now to look more closely at a Hegelian transition in order later to be able to contrast it with a Marxian transition.

Hegel initially made his name in philosophy by espousing a philosophy of identity with his senior colleague at Jena University, Schelling.² This philosophy of identity was intended to contrast with Kant and Fichte's subjective idealism. In 1802–3 Hegel produced with Schelling a *Critical Journal of Philosophy*, published in Tübingen in which they jointly argued for a philosophy of the absolute and which saw the absolute identity of subject

and object as best being attained in art.³ Hegel subsequently broke with Schelling because although he agreed with Schelling that the purpose of philosophy should be to achieve the identity of subject and object he felt this could best be achieved not through the form of immediate intellectual intuition advocated by Schelling (and typified in art) but through systematic philosophical argument.⁴ Hegel believed that Schelling took as his presupposition precisely what had to be proved to be true.

This theme of the identity of the subject and object – unhampered by the Kantian postulate of a thing in itself – is taken up again in Hegel's *Logic*. Hegel sees the transition from the objective realm of the first volume of the *Logic* to the subjective realm of the second volume, not only as demonstrating the interconnections of the linking terms, necessity and freedom, but as also demonstrating the unity of subject and object.⁵ And when Hegel speaks of the unity of the subject and object we can be sure that the absolute is not far away. Just as the *Phenomenology of Spirit* has the negative task of showing that the subjective reality of our consciousness and self-consciousness is identical with the world it experiences, so the *Logic* has the positive task of showing that the objective world of experience is identical with our self-consciousness. Hegel sees both processes in a semi-theological way as leading our thought to the absolute.

For Hegel, as we have seen, his objective logic represents, or rather is, the possibility of the world, and so takes the place of previous metaphysics. Categories such as quality, quantity, appearance and existence create our concrete experience. The subjective logic which Hegel calls the logic of the concept (*Begriff*) deals, on the other hand, with most of what is usually treated in formal logic. The subjective logic takes on an even more strongly Kantian flavour because Hegel attributes to Kant the discovery of the importance of the self (with his concept of the unity of apperception) for our knowledge and comprehension.⁶ Hegel's task in the chapters concerned with the transition is to show that the truth of objective logic is suspended or *aufgehoben* in the subjective logic.

The absolute is the first term with which the final section on actuality opens. It seems somewhat peculiar to found our experience on such an apparently extravagant concept as the absolute. However, Hegel's procedure may appear less implausible if we

see him as speaking in terms of the absolute presuppositions of experience. And such an absolute presupposition of experience for Hegel, following Kant, is the notion that there must be something permanent forming the backdrop to what we perceive and interact with. This is why, with some modifications, Hegel depicts the absolute as the substance of Spinoza's *Ethic*. 'Corresponding to the concept of the absolute', he says, 'and to the relation of reflection to it . . . is the concept of substance in Spinoza. Spinozism is a defective philosophy because in it reflection and its manifold determining is an external thinking'.⁷ The second term Hegel expounds is actuality itself. In the subdivisions of actuality Hegel deals with, first, contingency, possibility and necessity; secondly relative necessity, possibility and necessity; and, thirdly, absolute necessity. Hegel's purpose in analysing all the sub-divisions of the category of actuality is, in his words, to show that 'the blind transition of necessity is rather the absolute's own exposition, the movement of the absolute within itself which, in its alienation, rather reveals itself'.⁸ The third and final term Hegel expounds leading up to the subjective logic is the term absolute relation which also has three subdivisions, namely, the relation of substantiality, the relation of causality and the relation of reciprocity. The analysis of the final section of the objective logic on actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) is, in short, an analysis of substance and its relations. Although not on the same metaphysical plane, this analysis provides in many respects the model for Marx's account of capitalist production. In a different form the same categories of reality, causality, reciprocity and necessity play a crucial role in his portrayal of the development of the modern economy.

As Marx realized, it is not always possible to extract Hegel's arguments from their idealist and theological embellishments. Hegel is, as we have seen, not prepared to confine himself to analysis of the relationships between concepts. He regards his analysis as having a deep ontological significance. This is why he is able to identify the first, static conception of actuality with Spinoza's concept of substance, which is both divine and total, representing God's true existence. But Hegel, to his credit, is not happy with this account of actuality as one all-embracing substance which contains within it all that exists and can potentially occur. His dialectical approach requires that actuality make room

for the concepts of individuality, subjectivity and, above all, spirit if it is to reflect the true nature of experience. Hegel sums up his relationship to Spinoza in a most interesting way in this remark to paragraph 151 in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*:

Though an essential stage in the evolution of the idea, substance is not the same as the idea itself, or the absolute idea, but the idea under the still limited form of necessity. It is true that God is necessity or, as we may also say, he is the absolute object [*Sache*], but he is at the same time the absolute person. That he is the absolute Person however is a point which the philosophy of Spinoza never reached: and on that side it falls short of the true notion of God which forms the content of religious consciousness in Christianity. Spinoza was by descent a Jew; and it is upon the whole Oriental way of seeing things, according to which the nature of the finite world seems frail and transient that has found intellectual expression in his system. The Oriental view of the unity of substance certainly gives the basis for all real further development. Still it is not the final idea. It is marked by the absence of the principle of the western world, the principle of individuality, which first appeared contemporaneously with Spinozism in the monadology of Leibniz.⁹

Growth, individuality and opposition are essential to any satisfactory dialectical view of the world.

Hegel tries to demonstrate the lack of individuality in Spinoza's concept of substance through his analysis of those categories which lead up to the subjective logic, (the relationship of) substantiality, causality and reciprocity. According to Spinoza all the detailed wealth of our experience is the outpouring of the one substance. What we experience are no more than the accidents of that substance.¹⁰ Hegel tries to show that these accidents are just as essential to the relationship of substantiality as is substance itself. This criticism of Spinoza brings Hegel on to the category of causality and the relationship of cause and effect. Hegel puts his objection to Spinoza's position in this way:

Substance is cause in so far as substance reflects into self as against its passage into accidentality and so stands as the primary fact, but again no less suspends this reflection-into-self (its bare possibility), lays itself down as the negative of itself and thus produces an effect.¹¹

No doubt the category cause first appears as the original or primary category which sets in train the reaction known as the effect. The cause appears, then, essential and the effect appears as inessential or a mere response. But this initial appearance is

misleading. Hegel suggests that the effect is equally as necessary as the cause, since we cannot attest to a cause without first observing an effect. The most important point, in Hegel's view, is to clear up the confusion about the apparent independence of the cause from the effect. Much of the power of Spinoza's concept of substance derives from keeping the one distinct from the other. Isolated as the first and only cause, the one divine substance puts all else into the shade.¹² Cause and effect are, indeed, distinct but they are not separate. Spinoza's divine being cannot be independent of its effects. According to Hegel even with ordinary cases of causality 'we can see this identity between cause and effect in point of contact. The rain (the cause) and the wet (the effect) are the self-same existing water'. Thus we could not speak of the 'way of God in the world' without the apparently devastating effects which we can observe wreaked by the almighty cause. Indeed since it is the effect which first draws our attention to the possibility of a cause we might turn the tables entirely and argue that the effect is the primary or original fact and suggest, as does Hume, that we should content ourselves with observing effects without enquiring after deeper causes. In other words, the world may have its way, but this is not necessarily the way of God.¹³

This is not, of course, a path which appeals to Hegel. In his view, neither cause nor effect is primary. This is, as we shall see, a view shared by Marx. They are part of the one substantial relationship. Effect implies cause, just as cause implies effect. Just as no effect is self-subsistent, no cause is entirely self-subsistent. This can be seen in the fact that causes can often themselves be seen as prior effects of a further cause. For example the wetness caused by rain can be seen as the result of prior atmospheric changes. The existence of such causal chains had led some philosophers, such as Hobbes, to argue that there is an infinite causal chain which must lead ultimately to the one ultimate cause.¹⁴ However, whilst accepting the interrelationship of cause and effect Hegel does not accept that this necessarily leads to an infinite regression. For him this is a bad infinite in which the opposition between cause and effect is not resolved; whereas the true infinite is one where, just as with cause and effect, finite and infinite are seen as mutually determining. 'This infinity,' Hegel says in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, 'is only a negation of a finite: but the finite rises again the same as ever, and is never got rid of and

absorbed. In other words, this infinite only expresses the ought to be [*sollen*] elimination of the finite. The progression to infinity never gets further than a statement of the contradictions involved in the finite, that it is both *something* and its other. It is the perennial continuation of the alternation between these two terms, each leading up to the other'¹⁵ The endless repetition of cause and effect leads nowhere. Hegel sees the true infinite as qualitatively different from this unceasing regression. In the true infinite each moment of the opposition is seen as containing the other. The infinite lies in the finite and the finite lies in the infinite; thus there is no question of the finite becoming infinite and the infinite becoming finite. As Charles Taylor aptly puts it:

The Hegelian notion of the infinite is therefore that of an infinite life embodied in a circle of finite beings, each of which is inadequate to it and therefore goes under, but is replaced in a necessary order by another, the whole series not being boundless but closed in on itself in a circle . . . The infinite must thus englobe the finite. At its most basic level this reflects Hegel's option for an absolute which is not separate from or beyond the world but includes it as its embodiment.¹⁶

Hegel's analysis of causality leads him, therefore, directly to the category of reciprocity. Since cause and effect are mutually determining they can be seen as in reciprocal relationship with each other as *action* and *reaction*. In looking closely at the categories of cause and effect we realize it is misleading to see the one category as the passive one and the other as the active one. Both are active and passive in turn. In reciprocity the two opposed poles of cause and effect are seen as part of a continuing process where neither one nor the other takes the lead.

This is an important methodological point which has a large number of ramifications. And it is surely not a point that can be overlooked (as both Hegel and Marx are aware) in the study of society. Public opinion, common prejudice and the prevailing mood within societies often combine in denoting one phenomenon as the *cause* of present discontents. Hegel's dialectical analysis suggests that the prudent observer would do well to reverse the accepted priorities and see the effect as in turn a cause. The rabble rouser, the mob orator and the street rioter (as many a historian has noted) are as much products of an uprooted, disturbed environment as its cause. Hegel's analysis suggests

also that removing such an apparent cause, as the mob orator or street rioter, may do little to lessen the discontent since the reciprocal nature of the relationship between cause and effect ensures that once an apparent source of discontent is removed another will necessarily emerge.

In an article in the *New York Daily Tribune*, 18 February 1853, Marx employs a similar line of argument in dealing with the problem of capital punishment. As one might expect, Marx finds the spectacle of capital punishment in a supposedly civilized society as a wholly degrading one. He draws on Kant's and Hegel's retributive theory of punishment as the only one that might possibly morally justify the act. According to Kant and Hegel, punishment is something the criminal calls for himself: the individual's dignity as a free person depends on the act being regarded as a voluntary one and therefore voluntarily willing its public consequences. But Marx is unconvinced by this view. 'Is it not a delusion to substitute for the individual with his real motives, with multifarious social circumstances pressing upon him, the abstraction of free will?'¹⁷ Marx is impressed by the statistical regularity with which crimes and punishments occur within the civilized societies. He quotes the work of A. Quetelet on *L'Homme et ses facultés* who was able to predict with some certainty the probable numbers of different types of crime which would be committed in France in 1830.¹⁸ Quetelet saw this as evidence of the operation of the laws of cause and effect in human society just as much as in the natural world. But with a brilliant dialectical touch, Marx reverses the apparent priority of cause and effect. Ordinarily punishment is seen as the innocent outcome of the underlying wrong: the presence of crime in society. But Marx concludes with this stark challenge to his readers: 'Is there not a necessity for deeply reflecting upon an alteration of the system that breeds these crimes, instead of glorifying the hangman who executes a lot of criminals to make room only for the supply of new ones.'¹⁹

Cause and effect should, therefore, not be seen as mechanistically related to one another. It is important to bear in mind, as modern jargon has it, that there is always a feedback from effect to cause and cause to effect. As Hegel puts it:

In reciprocity . . . the straight line movement from causes to effect

and from effects to causes, is bent round and back into itself and thus the progress *ad infinitum* . . . is . . . really and truly suspended.²⁰

With reciprocity we are dealing not with a mechanistic relationship but an organic relationship, namely, one that is imbued with life. In an organic relationship action (cause) and reaction (effect) are equivalents in one process. As Crawford Elder remarks: 'Hence in a certain sense it is also right to say that what each cause causes is itself; in a certain sense it is also right to say that everything which gets necessitated, brought about, is necessitated not by some alien other at all but by itself'.²¹ Neither is prior nor superior to the other. The poles in the relationship must be dealt with as equals. Hegel sees this as the transition to freedom, or in terms of his *Logic* as a transition to the concept (*Begriff*), and the subjective logic: 'the dialectical movement of substance through causality and reciprocity is the immediate genesis of the concept, the exposition of the process of its becoming'.²²

But there is no necessary link between the category of reciprocity and the concept of freedom. Although the category of reciprocity can be applied to the relationship between two or more free and equal human beings it is not true that the category forms a vital or only bridge between the human and non-human world. Hegel sees the category of reciprocity as the point of transition between necessity and freedom, but why does he suppose that such a point of transition is required? Surely the points of contact between the human and non-human world are so infinite and complex that to seek *one* essential, universal point of contact takes to extremes the desire for logical completeness and neatness. Hegel achieves a considerable feat in demonstrating *one* way in which we might wish to see the world of human action and the external world as intimately interconnected. There appears to be a progression in the categories we use to understand our environment from the simple and mechanistic to the complex and organic. The category reciprocity is also one that is well chosen to denote the appearance of freedom. In political life the reciprocal acceptance of equality with other persons is essential for each to exercise his freedom. We have to accord equal or *reciprocal* rights to others if we are ourselves to enjoy liberty. One individual cannot consistently claim rights without acknowledging the re-

ciprocal rights of others.²³ In the political realm there is, therefore, a strong case for arguing that reciprocity and freedom are closely, if not necessarily, related.

Hegel demonstrates the merits of his own dialectical approach in the case he puts against Spinoza's concept of substance. Spinoza argues for a fully deterministic view of experience where all events and actions are seen as emanating from the prior thought of substance. Every existent is, therefore, merely an accident of substance. Every individual human being is, consequently, a mere aspect of this substance. As Malcolm Clark puts it:

Spinoza's metaphysics, Hegel holds, represents the final point of reflection that remains external. For all its grandeur, it does no more than take up determinations that are given and predicate them of the absolute, rather than deriving them from the absolute with the immanent necessity of thought. Spinoza's totality remains, in the end, merely formal and abstract.²⁴

But Hegel shows that the modes and attributes of substance are just as essential as substance itself and, indeed, if substance is seen as distinct and independent then the human being is equally so.²⁵ In this respect also Hegel can be thought to have brought subjectivity on to the scene in a plausible and systematic way. Thus, although the transition to the subjective logic brings out Hegel's excessive idealism it can, nevertheless, be taken as a plausible response to Spinoza's substance, if not to all the other problems of ontology.

Hegel on the syllogism

Aristotle defines a syllogism as 'a form of speech in which, certain things being laid down, something else follows of necessity from them'.²⁶ Aristotle thought it to be a very important form, devoting the whole of his *Prior Analytics* to the topic. Within formal logic an exposition of the various kinds of syllogism is indispensable. In essence, what the rules of the syllogism demonstrate is, how from two given propositions a third proposition necessarily follows. None of the three propositions need be factually true, the crucial thing is that the conclusion should follow from the two given propositions.

In Hegel's *Logic* discussion of the syllogism follows on from his account of the judgement. The syllogism is, in Hegel's view, not only a superior logical form to the judgement, but also contains what remains true of the judgement.²⁷ In the syllogism it is two judgements which are brought together by a middle term (itself a judgement) to produce a formally valid conclusion. Thus, the syllogism is made up of judgements which are related to each other in a formally sound and conclusive way. In Hegel's terms, the judgement is here subsumed in the syllogism.

The syllogistic process Hegel regards as a characteristic of reason, marking reason off from the understanding. Hegel sees the understanding as isolating, refining and categorizing, but reason he sees as unifying those properties and categories brought to the fore by understanding. Typically the activity of the understanding is one of analysis and the activity of reason is one of synthesis. In the *Encyclopaedia* version of the *Logic* Hegel speaks of the understanding as forming concepts and reason drawing conclusions.²⁸ But the line of demarcation is not a hard and fast one. Reason builds upon the insights of the understanding, just as the syllogism can also be a tool of the understanding. Indeed, Hegel attributes many of the problems of the usual presentation of the syllogism to the fact that often what is being dealt with is only the syllogism of the understanding.²⁹ Hegel sees human reason, in the same way as Kant, as trying always to interpret experience in its totality. One of reason's principal tools in attempting this task is the syllogism properly employed as 'the rational and everything rational'.³⁰ Although the syllogism, as with the judgement, first appears to be a tool of understanding through which our various observations and experiences are classified and categorized, closer inspection demonstrates that the syllogism's key characteristic is one of synthesis. As Hegel says, 'the essential feature of the syllogism is the unity of the extremes, the unifying middle term and the ground which maintains them'.³¹ A syllogism should not, in his view, be seen as bringing together two seemingly independent conditions or properties. For Hegel, who takes a rationalist view of the universe, it is not merely a happy accident that many aspects of our experience are syllogistically related to one another but this, rather, is the essence of things.³²

Hegel sets out various forms of the syllogism in an order of priority. The lowest (and, therefore, least intellectually satisfying) form is the syllogism of existence or the qualitative syllogism.³³ A syllogism of existence provides in its conclusion an item of information about a person, thing or event. In the example Hegel gives the conclusion is 'Gaius is mortal'. But the types of syllogism increasingly improve in their effectiveness giving us the higher forms of the syllogism of reflection and the syllogism of necessity. With a syllogism of reflection the three propositions or terms which make up the syllogism are brought together in a more persuasive way so that the conclusion provides not merely an item of information but a proposition which may have many fruitful implications. Finally, Hegel sees as the highest form of syllogism the syllogism of necessity. The conclusion of a syllogism of necessity he sees not only as informative and fruitful but also as containing a necessary truth. Of the three types of syllogism of necessity, the categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive, Hegel sees, for reasons we shall see later, the disjunctive as the highest and most dialectical form.

Hegel's discussion of the various aspects of the syllogism of existence or qualitative syllogism is complex. What accounts for this complexity is that he separates the three propositions that make up the syllogism into first, the statement which concerns the individual (e.g., 'this rose is red'); secondly, the statement which concerns the particular (e.g., 'red is a colour'); thirdly, the statement which concerns the general or universal (e.g. 'this rose is a coloured object'). Unfortunately, examples of individual, particular and universal statements do not greatly help as what appears as the individual, particular or universal statement in one syllogism might also appear in any of the three roles in another syllogism.³⁴ The reason for this is that the individual, the particular and the universal are defined *in relation* to one another within a syllogism. This is a point that Hegel draws out in his extended analysis of the syllogism of existence when he examines the possibilities that are opened up by changing the positions of the various terms of the syllogism. The usual way in which the syllogism of existence is stated is with the individual proposition first, followed by the particular proposition with the universal coming in the conclusion. In our example this reads as:

This rose is red	–	Individual
Red is a colour	–	Particular
This rose is a coloured object	–	Universal

But Hegel suggests that this might equally be read as:

Red is a colour	–	Particular
This rose is red	–	Individual
This rose is a coloured object	–	Universal

or:

This rose is red	–	Individual
This rose is a coloured object	–	Universal
Red is a colour	–	Particular

Hegel thus presents these three figures in notational form, I-P-U, P-I-U and I-U-P. In the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, for reasons that are left unexplained, the first and last terms are reversed in the final two figures to give the three figures: I-P-U, U-I-P and P-U-I.³⁵ This notational form and the interchangeability of terms rightly bring to mind Marx's analysis of the circulation of commodities in *Capital*. In *Capital* Marx takes the simple figure of Commodity–Money–Commodity (C–M–C), and by looking at its various ramifications derives his theory of money.³⁶ Just as Hegel uses his analysis primarily to show how each configuration of the syllogism of existence provides us with a progressively more satisfactory type of argument and knowledge, so Marx uses his analysis to show how simple commodity circulation can give rise to money and capital.

Hegel is particularly scathing about the weaknesses of the first figure of the syllogism of existence (I-P-U). This, in his view, is the syllogism as it is commonly understood (or misunderstood) as three judgements artificially brought together:

At the approach of this kind of syllogism we are at once seized with the feeling of boredom; this stems from that unprofitable form which by means of the isolated propositions presents a semblance of difference that immediately dissolves in the fact itself. It is mainly this subjective shape that gives the syllogistic process the appearance of a subjective makeshift to which reason and understanding resorts when it cannot immediately comprehend. The nature of things, the rational element, certainly does not set to work by first framing for itself a major premiss, the relation of a particularity to a subsistent universal, and then secondly, picking up a separate

relation of an individuality to the particular, out of which thirdly and lastly a new proposition comes to light. This syllogistic process that advances by means of separate propositions is nothing but a subjective form.³⁷

Everything that enters our conscious experience is, in Hegel's view, already a syllogism: 'a universal that through particularity is united with individuality'.³⁸ This is not a point which requires labouring, since a condition of our recognizing any distinct entity or event is that it should possess an identity. And for it to possess an identity an entity or event must have a particular property or properties that marks it off as being of a certain kind. For instance, when we see and recognize snow. Here we have already gone through a syllogistic process. The mind will have gone (instantaneously) through the process of observing small, feathery, white objects fall from the sky, noted they are snow-flakes and come to the conclusion that it is snowing. As Hegel puts it, in giving his own anachronistic example:

the several forms of syllogism make themselves constantly felt in our cognition. If anyone, when awakening on a winter morning, hears the creaking of the carriages on the street, and is thus led to the conclusion that it has frozen hard in the night, he has gone through a syllogistic operation – an operation which is every day repeated under the greatest variety of conditions'.³⁹

In contrast with the instantaneous processes of the cultivated human mind the manner in which the syllogism of existence is laid out is both cumbersome and mechanical. Hegel is particularly unhappy about the way in which the terms that appear in this kind of syllogism are chosen. Here any property of an object may be picked out to connect the individual proposition with the universal. Indeed, nothing is proved by citing a syllogism of existence since all depends on the middle term one adopts. As Hegel says, we can correctly infer from the middle term that the wall is being painted blue that the wall will be blue, but if we know that the wall beforehand was yellow it would be equally correct to conclude that the wall will be green. The qualitative syllogism has no way of coping with such contingencies. Many defects in ordinary argument can be seen to arise in this way:

From the middle term of the gravitation of the planets, satellites and comets towards the sun, it correctly follows that these bodies fall into the sun; but they do not fall into it because each is no less its own centre of gravity, or, as it is said, they are impelled by centrifugal

force. Similarly, from the middle term of sociality we can deduce the community of goods among citizens, but from the middle term of individuality, if it is pursued with equal abstraction, there follows the dissolution of the state, as happened in the Holy Roman Empire from holding to the latter middle term. It is justly held that there is nothing so inadequate as a formal syllogism of this kind, since it is a matter of choice or caprice which middle term is employed.⁴⁰

Hegel sees Kant's antinomies in the *Critique of Pure Reason* as arising in a similar way through choosing alternating middle terms for his theses and antitheses.⁴¹ The only way out of such confusions is to abandon the syllogism of existence and turn to more satisfactory forms of the syllogism.

The syllogism which follows on the syllogism of existence in Hegel's account is the syllogism of *reflection*. In the syllogism of reflection the middle term does not express a merely accidental or contingent connection, but an appropriate and interesting one. It is clear from the beginning with the syllogism of reflection that each term is indicated by the others and that, consequently, 'the middle term is posited as the totality of the terms'.⁴² The middle term does not connect the subject with this or that quality, rather the subject is now united with its *genus* or *Species*.

Hegel suggests there are three types of syllogism of reflection, namely, the syllogism of allness, the syllogism of induction and the syllogism of analogy. It is not surprising that he also refers to them as syllogisms of the understanding since they appear to be typical of the kind of thinking employed in the natural sciences – thinking which Hegel generally includes under understanding (*Verstand*) rather than reason (*Vernunft*). The object of such syllogisms is to subsume a particular instance under a general rule. The syllogism of allness does so by presupposing in its major premiss the conclusion of the syllogism. Thus, for instance, we can readily conclude from the fact that:

All men are mortal,
Gaius is a man;
Gaius is mortal.

Hegel thinks not a great deal is achieved by adumbrating this kind of syllogism. This syllogism represents an improvement upon the syllogism of existence only because the category of 'all' excludes contrary determinations of the same subject, so the

syllogism (of allness) has the mark of greater concreteness. Even greater concreteness is given by the syllogism of induction which actually requires that each individual be investigated to ensure that the exclusive property attributed to the genus is correctly attributed. Hegel refers to it as the 'syllogism of experience' as opposed to the syllogisms of existence which were merely 'syllogisms of perception or of contingent experience'.⁴³ In the *Encyclopaedia* version of the *Logic* Hegel gives as an example of an inductive syllogism the process of establishing that all metals conduct electricity:

Gold is a metal: silver is a metal: so is copper, lead, etc. This is the major premiss. Then comes the minor premiss: all these bodies conduct electricity; and hence results the conclusion, that all metals conduct electricity.⁴⁴

But this is always an incomplete syllogism (presumably this is why a number of logicians have refused to recognize it as a form of the syllogism) since the investigations necessary to round off comprehensively (and exhaustively) the middle term can be continued *ad infinitum*. In our example, it always remains a possibility that a metal which does not conduct electricity might one day be discovered. Thus, the conclusion of the syllogism can only be forwarded provisionally on the basis of present knowledge and information.⁴⁵ Karl Popper's theory of knowledge, which draws heavily on the principle of induction has a similar structure, placing heavy emphasis on the provisional nature of any knowledge we may hold.

It is the incompleteness of the syllogism of induction that leads on, in Hegel's view, to the syllogism of analogy. Ultimately our acceptance of the truth of a syllogism of induction rests upon an analogy, namely, the assumption that all other possible members of that species will share the same property. It is for all practical purposes assumed, for instance, that all metals are malleable (including within this all future metals that may be discovered) on an analogy with the properties of all metals encountered up to now. Although inconclusive and unsatisfactory – since with a syllogism of analogy it cannot be attested for certain that this or that property belongs to something – Hegel holds the syllogism of analogy to be a higher form than the other two syllogisms of reflection because it seeks to introduce new knowledge, not

already contained in the major premiss. We might, for instance, argue by analogy (as Hegel suggests):

The earth is inhabited
The moon is an earth
Therefore the moon is inhabited.⁴⁶

This analogy is, no doubt, incorrect, but there is in the form the possibility of concluding something new. This kind of reasoning has proved of immense value in the natural sciences in providing hypotheses about the behaviour of plants, animals, solids, liquids and gases. As Hegel puts it in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*:

Analogy is the instinct of reason, which intimates that this or that characteristic which experience has discovered has its root in the inner nature or genus of an object, and argues further on that basis.⁴⁷

As we might expect Hegel is not content with the mere instinct of reason and moves on to the syllogism of necessity as a means of fully realizing the requirements of rationality. Just as the syllogism of existence takes on the general form of I-P-U or individual, particular and universal, Hegel argues that the syllogism of reflection takes on the general form of P-I-U (particular, individual, universal). In contrast the syllogism of necessity takes on the general form of I-U-P. Whereas Aristotle (reflecting his more empirical frame of mind) regarded the first figure as the only wholly satisfactory one, Hegel regards the third figure as a much more promising basis for providing a truly rational conclusion. Whilst, on the one hand, a syllogism of existence connects the individual with the universal in a wholly haphazard and contingent way and a syllogism of reflection connects the particular with the universal in a coherent but incomplete way, a syllogism of necessity on the other hand, connects the universal with the individual and particular in an objective and complete way. In a syllogism of necessity the particular is related to the universal not through one or other more or less important characteristic but through its essential characteristic.⁴⁸ This is, Hegel suggests, the only acceptable path for a dialectical chain of reasoning to follow.

Just as with the two other types of syllogism, Hegel divides the syllogism of necessity into three kinds: the categorical, the hypothetical and the disjunctive. Once again each is regarded as

progressively more concrete and objective than its predecessor, from which it is dialectically derived. A categorical syllogism 'has the categorical judgement for one or both of its premisses.' Here 'a subject is united with its predicate through its *substance*'.⁴⁹ For instance:

Liza is a lioness
 Lionesses are members of the cat family
 Liza is a member of the cat family.

This categorical syllogism does not, as do the syllogisms of reflection, presuppose its conclusion for its premisses. Here 'the subject is no longer contingently united through the syllogism with any quality through any middle term'.⁵⁰ This syllogism represents an objective advance in our knowledge, the individual is correctly categorized. But for Hegel there is still a subjective element to the categorical syllogism. This subjective element he attributes to the fact that the individual or subject which figures in the syllogism is entirely contingent. In our example, the syllogism itself provides no reason or justification why Liza was chosen rather than an infinite number of other lionesses. And because the lioness, Liza, has other characteristics which determine its individuality and are not taken up in the syllogism Hegel thinks it lacks concreteness.

Greater objectivity and concreteness are to be found in the hypothetical and disjunctive forms of the syllogism. These are, in Hegel's view, the two highest forms of the syllogism, with the disjunctive syllogism representing the highest form of all. Because the disjunctive syllogism brings to perfection the syllogistic form of knowledge Hegel regards it as superseding (*aufheben*, i.e., both preserving and destroying) the logical syllogism. Why does Hegel attribute this power to the disjunctive syllogism?

The hypothetical and disjunctive syllogisms take a form which is both elegant and surprisingly simple. The hypothetical syllogism states that:

If A is, then B is
 But A is
 Therefore B is⁵¹

and the disjunctive syllogism, which is a firmer version of the above states that:

A is either B or C or D
 But A is B
 Therefore A is neither C nor D.⁵²

These two syllogisms take Hegel's eye because of their *objectivity*. Their middle terms affirm and at the same time rule out the most pertinent and essential pieces of information. The hypothetical syllogism allows us to identify what is the case given certain relevant information, and the disjunctive syllogism allows us to determine precisely the nature of the subject of the syllogism. From the beginning the disjunctive syllogism is imbued with concreteness. Each term represents in its own right a valuable addition to our knowledge and when brought together in one syllogism these terms represent a most powerful and irrefutable argument. As Charles Taylor remarks:

What is being demanded of the syllogism here is something we do not usually ask of our inferences: not just that the conclusion follow from the premises, but that these two be grounded in necessity. What is being sought . . . is a form of self-subsistent necessity, a necessity of reasoning which requires no postulate, when whatever is given at the beginning must be shown out of the system.⁵³

Another way in which the disjunctive syllogism can be stated is, Hegel suggests:

A is either B or C or D
 But A is neither C nor D
 Therefore A is B.⁵⁴

Here it is even clearer that the basis of the disjunctive syllogism is the actual nature of the subject. Nothing is merely conjectured about its properties. The subject is first known to be one of a number of possibles, but the subject is, secondly, known not to be these particular possibles, consequently the conclusion that it is this or that (possible) is unavoidable.

Hegel takes this form of the syllogism to subvert the syllogism as such because the middle term no longer genuinely represents a mediating or connecting factor. The middle term here does not bring the subject together with one or other predicate, rather it fully identifies the subject. The appearance of the syllogism being a three-stage process is, therefore, undermined since the middle term already forms the conclusion. The apparent artificiality of

the syllogistic process equally disappears since it is no longer a question of connecting distinct entities or events, but of demonstrating the essential nature of an entity or event. In superseding the syllogism we are, Hegel thinks, led necessarily to the form of objectivity.

Essentially it is because of its objectivity, namely, that it systematically connects two known realities in our experience, that Hegel regards the disjunctive syllogism as the most advanced form of the syllogism. But because it deals with such concrete realities the disjunctive syllogism is not the typical form of the syllogism. To this extent we can agree with Hegel that the syllogism of necessity supersedes the syllogistic form. The more typical form is one that deals with exemplifying aspects of our experience (syllogism of reflection) or, least pleasingly of all, with fortuitous or contingent aspects of our experience (syllogism of existence or the qualitative syllogism).

Summing up Hegel's account of the syllogism presents considerable difficulties. In the first place, Hegel's account differs so markedly from that given in standard textbooks of logic that it is difficult to maintain that he and the ordinary logician are talking about the same thing. No doubt their starting points are the same: the pioneering work of Aristotle remains the foundation both for Hegel's enquiry and that of the ordinary logician. However, from this point on similarities are few. Hegel wants to subvert the usual mode of presentation of the syllogistic forms. He puts the various types of syllogism into a hierarchical order. The ordinary logician would not only question the hierarchical ordering but also the typology. To the best of my knowledge, the textbooks on logic contain nothing on syllogisms of existence, reflection and necessity. These are Hegel's own categories. Some of the syllogisms contained within these broad categories are discernibly the same as syllogisms dealt with in the textbooks, e.g., the categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive syllogism, but few logicians would recognize as syllogisms Hegel's inductive and analogical syllogisms. Hegel's notational form is equally original (to himself) and although it illuminates his account of the syllogistic forms it is doubtful that it would be acceptable to mainstream logicians. But this is a minor point, since the use of some notational form is standard practice in all books on logic.

Given the divergences and similarities between Hegel's logic

and conventional logic what are we to make of Hegel's venture in the field? I think his account of logic can best be understood and valued as an attempt to demonstrate practically what he thinks could be achieved using his dialectical method. The use of this dialectical method leads Hegel to oppose an exposition of the subject which does not systematically relate its various parts. No account of the syllogism will do, for instance, if it does not relate the syllogism to its immediate antecedent, the judgement, and to the overriding question of the objectivity of our thinking. The syllogism, like logic in general, should not, in his view, be seen as a subjective tool which we merely manipulate for entertainment or simply to demonstrate cleverness and agility of mind. Logical forms for Hegel have a vital significance in ordering our lives as social beings and citizens. Hegel wants the student of logic to internalize its most significant forms both to see how he or she already unconsciously employs such forms and to see how this unconscious operation might consciously be improved. This is what leads Hegel ultimately to link up logic with life⁵⁵ and, finally, the idea of the true with the idea of the good.⁵⁶ The *Science of Logic* is the unfolding of reality.

For Hegel human experience is a totality. He accepts no final division between the internal and the external, between thought and its object, mind and body. Where the two appear to be irretrievably separated Hegel argues this is quite simply – as the phrase itself suggests – an appearance. The forms of traditional logic and the hurly-burly concerns of everyday life seem at first glance to be poles apart. But all such opposites are necessarily interrelated. Life is as much an idea (for Hegel part of the one over-arching Idea) as the categories of formal logic, and the categories of formal logic make sense only when seen as part of the process of the construction of reality. The same vision of the unity of subject and object within one absolute totality informs Hegel's *Logic* as first fired him to take up philosophy as a career at Jena University in 1800. Hegel sees the *Logic* as providing conclusive proof of what all the great philosophers had intimated, namely, that human thought is capable of complete objectivity and the universe is correspondingly fully rational. The rational and real are, therefore, one.

It is this ambitious programme that Hegel wants to complete in the concluding section of the *Science of Logic*, on the idea and the

absolute idea. Within this section he deals with life as 'the immediate [*unmittelbare*] idea', whose concept 'is reduced in a body'.⁵⁷ Hegel is conscious that the 'idea of life is concerned with a subject matter so concrete, and if you will be so real, that with it we may seem to have overstepped the domain of logic as it is commonly conceived'.⁵⁸ But as the *idea* represents the totality of our experience Hegel thinks it only natural that a discussion of the 'idea' begins with our total experiences in its most obvious and direct form. Hegel argues that the logical idea of life is different from the spiritual and scientific ideas of life as it deals only with life's conceptual structure. There are three aspects to this structure: first, the concept of the living individual; secondly, the concept of the life process, which encompasses both the life and death of individuals; thirdly, the concept of the genus or species process which is 'the process of overcoming [*aufheben*], its individualization and relating itself to its objective existence as itself'.⁵⁹

As we might expect, Hegel takes a dialectical view of life seeing it both as a process of coming to be and ceasing to be. The life of the individual appears as the first positive step in the process, only to be negated by the death of that individual. But this negation is superseded by the life of the species which is the process of the continued demise and renewal of the members of the species. This cycle is not though peculiar to human life, all animal life takes on a similar form. The conscious human individual cannot be satisfied with what Hegel calls this 'bad infinity' of continual demise and renewal,⁶⁰ and seeks satisfaction not in the life of the species itself but in the idea of that life. The human individual sees its truth not in the concrete existence of the species but in *spirit*. As Hegel strikingly puts it: 'The death of the solely immediate individual living being is the inauguration of spirit (*hervorgehen*)'.⁶¹

From this analysis of life the young Hegelian, Feuerbach, one of Hegel's most sensitive critics, derived his humanistic religion. In his early essay *Thoughts on Death and Immortality* he says to his audience in a Hegelian mode: 'Your essence as an individual is clearly the species, your essence as a man therefore is in mankind. The species, mankind, is to you therefore an object in that you distinguish it from your essence'.⁶² In the same vein he goes on to say, 'the individual dies because he is only a successive

moment in the renewal process of spirit, he dies only through and in history because he is a member of the historical whole'.⁶³ Feuerbach argues that it is implausible for anyone to claim physical immortality, however, true immortality is possible through our existence being remembered in the life of the species: 'The true belief in immortality is the belief in spirit itself, in consciousness, in its absolute essentially and infinite reality'.⁶⁴

Is life though a spiritual and logical totality as Hegel and the early Feuerbach believe? I think the thesis has to be considerably modified before it can be acceptable. Hegel's belief in the spirituality of life rests upon a teleological view of the world. The world is a whole, in Hegel's view, because it is informed by the purpose of an intangible, immaterial and ubiquitous intellectual essence. This essence is potentially all that is and all that will occur, but it reveals itself only gradually and progressively to the human spirit. Spirit becomes conscious of itself when the human mind comprehends what is around it and the events that occur. But Hegel reads backwards the true course of things. He sees evidence of spirit in the comprehensibility of the world to the rational human mind. He takes as unreal and untrue those objects and external events which appear to the human senses. But these objects and events, which initiate change in our experience, are real, and are not simply the external appearance of spirit. All our senses and our own mortality attest to the reality of a non-spiritual world. These are points brought by the later Feuerbach and the young Marx against Hegel's materialism. They both speak of the reality of human needs and the unquestionable reality of objects which are external to spirit.⁶⁵

However, there is a sense in which spirituality is a permanent aspect of our experience of the world. What is undeniable is that experience is always the experience of the human mind. As Kant intimated, the world of which we become conscious always bears upon it the mark of our own synthesizing activities. We observe, recall and understand objects always through the human eye and mind. Thus, although Hegel's claim that the world is teleological is incorrect it has to be acknowledged that the world we look upon is one which is both shaped by human activity and is thoroughly imbued with human purposes. Life is, indeed, not a

category that can be imputed to any world or to any object we care to imagine but it has nevertheless to be imputed to the world we know. In rejecting Hegel's view that the material world is ultimately all spiritual, I am prepared to accept the modified thesis that there is always an intellectual or spiritual element to our experience of the material.

No doubt, there is a great deal that is faulty and over-ambitious in Hegel's account of *Logic* and his view of the syllogism in particular, but, in my opinion he should be given credit for his attempt to make the subject more concrete and practical. Hegel is right about the usual *ennui* which accompanies the study of logic and right to have attempted to remove it. It might be argued that subsequent developments in logic, and in particular, in mathematical logic (through the work of Peirce, Frege and Russell) have made it a more exciting subject. But of course, Hegel's extravagant idealism and his implausible objective of fitting every logical form and important category of thought into one overall pattern prevents him from achieving his other purpose of making logic more relevant to the ordinary person. Indeed, the irony is that Hegel's idealistic exposition probably make his *Logic* a great deal less accessible to the ordinary person than even the driest book on conventional logic. Even the most committed Hegel scholars at times find themselves frustrated by his more obscure passages. But Hegel's failure to make his text popular does not mean that it contains nothing of wider concern. Later philosophers and social theorists have taken up Hegel's interests and concerns. Many have argued that the moral and natural sciences cannot be separated and many have also argued that philosophy must address itself to practical life (pragmatists, linguistic philosophers and social theorists). Marx, perhaps the most successful of Hegel's followers, showed conclusively that the dialectical exposition of a subject can meet with success with a wider public. And although logicians have not on the whole accepted Hegel's revision of the subject they have been led to accept that there are possible 'deviant logics'.⁶⁶ In Marx the idea of the true and the good are united in the theoretical exercise of comprehending capitalism. Hegel's attempt to establish the syllogism of a concrete form meets perhaps with its greatest success in Marx's exposition of the commodity form in *Capital*.

Notes

1. 'This amounts to a demand for a transcendental philosophy along Kantian lines. Hegel rarely characterizes his philosophy as transcendental; for the most part, he characterized it as *speculative*. However, his understanding of the "transcendental" was limited: he took it to refer to a philosophy of subjectivity and took exception to Kant's idea that a transcendental *consciousness* and not simply purely conceptual conditions was the ground of knowledge. . . . While Hegel condemned Kant's transcendentalism, he understood the rational core of Kant's theory not to be transcendental but to be speculative. For our purposes we can use "transcendental" in a broader sense than Hegel understood it, since in this broader sense it can perfectly well characterize his system also.' T. Pinkard, *The Logic of Hegel's Logic*, in *Hegel*, ed. H. Inwood, Oxford, 1985, p. 87.
2. F. W. T. Schelling was in fact Hegel's junior in age. They had been colleagues earlier at their Tübingen *Stift* (seminary). See H. S. Harris, *Hegel's Development, 1770-1801*, Oxford, 1972, pp. 64-6.
3. In his Jena essay on the *Difference Between the Fichtean and the Schellingian Philosophy*, tr. J. P. Surber, Ridgeview Publishing, Reseda, California, 1978, Hegel characterizes the philosophy of identity in this way: 'Philosophy and system coincide, and identity is not lost in the parts, much less in the result . . . it is necessary that the subject and object both be posited as subject-object.' *Ibid.*, pp. 71-2; *Werke* 2, p. 94.
4. 'The highest objectivity which the subject attains, the highest identity of subjective and objective, is that which Schelling terms the power of the imagination. Art is thus comprehended as what is inmost and highest, that which produces the intellectual and real in one and philosophizing is conceived as this genius of art. But art and power of imagination are not supreme. For the idea, spirit, cannot be truly given expression to in the manner in which art expresses its idea. This last is always a method pertaining to intuitive perception; and on account of this sensuous form of existence the work of art cannot correspond to the spirit. . . . What is lacking in Schelling's philosophy is thus the fact that the point of indifference of subjectivity and objectivity, or the notion of reason, is absolutely presupposed, without any attempt being made at showing that this is the truth.' *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 3, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1968, pp. 524-5; *Werke* 20, pp. 434-5. Cf. R. C. Solomon, *In the Spirit of Hegel*, Oxford, 1983, pp. 96-107.
5. 'The concept (*Begriff*) is the principle of freedom, the power of substance self-realized. It is a systematic whole, in which each of its constituent functions is the very total which the concept is, and is put as indissolubly one with it'. *Hegel's Logic*, tr. W. Wallace, para 160, p. 223; *Werke* 8, p. 307. Cf. J. E. Griffiss, 'The Kantian Background of Hegel's Logic', *New Scholasticism*, Vol. 43, 1969, p. 518: 'Nothing would remain outside the ego because in the development

of mind through the process of thought both subject and object would reveal themselves. This is the ultimate, absolute unification which Hegel sought to accomplish.'

6. 'Thus we are justified by a cardinal principle of the Kantian philosophy in referring to the nature of the I in order to learn what the concept (*Begriff*) is.' *Science of Logic*, p. 585; *Werke* 6, p. 255. Cf. C. Taylor, *Hegel*, Cambridge, 1978, pp. 297-8: 'Hegel takes the basic Kantian ideas of the original unity of apperception . . . and gives it a twist which Kant would have received with horror. . . . Where Kant went wrong, he says, was that he thought of this unity of the object in the thought of transcendental apperception as simply phenomenon, as set over against the thing in itself, which was unknowable . . . But, on Hegel's view, the concept is such that it develops the reality which corresponds to it out of itself'.
7. *Science of Logic*, p. 536; *Werke* 6, p. 195.
8. *Science of Logic*, p. 553; *Werke* 6, p. 217.
9. *Hegel's Logic*, pp. 211-2; *Werke* 8, p. 295.
10. *Hegel's Logic*, p. 213; *Werke* 8, p. 294: 'Substance accordingly is the totality of all the accidents, as an absolute power over them, and at the same time the wealth of all the content.' Cf. B. Spinoza, *Ethic*, Proposition XXIII. 'Every mode which exists necessarily and infinitely must necessarily follow either from the absolute nature of some attribute of God, or from some absolute modified by a modification which exist necessarily and infinitely.' *Spinoza: Selections*, ed. J. Wild, Scribner's, New York, 1958, p. 121.
11. *Hegel's Logic*, para 153, p. 125; *Werke* 8, p. 297. 'But substance is the necessity, the power which is fully manifest. Hence it is entirely deployed in the creation and destruction of accidents; and these "accidents" are subsisting entities. Hence this same power must also be seen as the flow of necessitation which runs between these entities; but this is the relation of cause to effect.' C. Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 288.
12. Spinoza, *Ethic*, Proposition XXXV: 'Whatever we conceive to be in God's power necessarily exists'. *Spinoza: Selections*, p. 133.
13. 'The efficacy or energy of causes is neither placed in the causes themselves, nor in the Deity, nor in the concurrence of these two principles, but belongs entirely to the soul, which considers the union of two or more objects in all past instances.' David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book One, Collins, London, 1962, p. 217.
14. 'For he that from any effect he seeth come to pass, should reason to the next and immediate cause thereof, and from thence to the cause of that cause, and plunge himself profoundly in the pursuit of causes; shall at last come to this, that there must be, or as even the heathen philosophers confessed, one first mover; that is, a first, and eternal cause of all things; which is that which men mean by the name of God.' *Leviathan*, Part One, ch. 12, Collins, London, 1969, p. 130. Cf. Spinoza, *Ethic* Proposition XXV 'God is not only the efficient cause of the existence of things, but also of their essence';

Proposition XXVI: 'A thing which has been determined to any action was necessarily so determined by God, and that which has not been thus determined by God cannot determine itself to action'. *Spinoza: Selections*, pp. 122-3.

15. *Hegel's Logic*, p. 137; *Werke* 8, p. 199.
16. C. Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 240.
17. *New York Daily Tribune*, 18 February 1853. Quoted in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy*, ed. T. B. Bottomore and M. Rubel, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1961, p. 234; *Marx-Engels Werke* 8, pp. 508-9.
18. A. Quetelet, *Sur L'Homme et le developpement de ses facultés ou Essai de physique social*, Vol. 1-2, Paris, 1835, p. 509.
19. *Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology*, p. 235; *Marx-Engels Werke* 8, p. 5.
20. *Hegel's Logic*, p. 217 1; *Werke* 8, p. 300.
21. Crawford Elder, *Appropriating Hegel*, Aberdeen University Press, Aberdeen, 1980, p. 26.
22. *Science of Logic*, p. 77; *Werke* 6.
23. This is a point that is made convincingly by Kant (drawing on Rousseau) in his theory of property rights. See H. Williams, *Kant's Political Philosophy*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1983, p. 86.
24. Malcolm Clark, *Logic and System*, M. Nijhoff The Hague, 1971, p. 90.
25. 'The Accidents of a Substance - are supposed to be items which we can pin down, and discuss, only by reference to that underlying Substance: they are phases of it, or features of it. Substance is, as Hegel puts it, the "absolute power" over the accidents. But it is equally true, as closer examination shows that substance needs its Accidents, and cannot be credited with a standing or a being of its own apart from them.' C. Elder, *Appropriating Hegel*, p. 25.
26. *Prior and Posterior Analytics*, Book 1, ch. 1.
27. *Science of Logic*, p. 664; *Werke* 6, p. 351: 'We have found the syllogism to be restoration of the concept in the judgement, and consequently the unity and truth of both.'
28. *Hegel's Logic*, p. 246; *Werke* 8, p. 334.
29. *Hegel's Logic*, p. 247; *Werke* 8, p. 335. 'In this syllogism the concept is at the very height of self-estrangement.'
30. *Hegel's Logic*, p. 244; *Werke* 8, p. 331.
31. *Science of Logic*, p. 655; *Werke* 6, p. 353.
32. 'Syllogism unites concept and judgement. And it too must be seen first as ontologically grounded.' C. Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 313.
33. Hegel uses the term 'syllogism of existence' (*des Schluss des Daseins*) in the *Science of Logic*, but prefers the title 'qualitative syllogism' in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*. However, in the first paragraph of his discussion in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* he makes it clear that he regards the two terms as synonymous. Cf. *Hegel's Logic* p. 246; *Werke* 8, p. 334.
34. 'Hence each of these realities is related to the whole through the other; and to the other through the whole. So that all three terms can be thought of as a middle term in its turn.' C. Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 313.

35. According to J. N. Findlay there are 'the three Aristotelian figures of syllogism, . . . We may note, however, that Hegel, for his own purposes, has altered the numbering of the traditional figures. The Hegelian second figure is the Third Figure of tradition and the Hegelian third figure the Second figure of tradition.' *Hegel: A Re-examination*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1958, p. 237.
36. An example of the way in which Marx works with the notational forms is given by his derivation of the General Formula for capital: 'The simplest form of the circulation of commodities is C-M-C, the transformation of commodities into money, and the change of the money back again into commodities; or selling in order to buy. But alongside this form we find another specifically different form: M-C-M, the transformation of money into commodities, and the changes of commodities back again into money; or buying in order to sell. Money that circulates in that manner is thereby transformed into, becomes capital, and is already potentially capital. *Capital*, Vol. 1, pp. 146-7; *Das Kapital*, *Werke* 23, p. 162.
37. *Science of Logic*, p. 669; *Werke* 6, p. 358.
38. *Science of Logic*, p. 669; *Werke* 6, 359. 'With these words, Hegel reminds the reader that he is not simply repeating the rules for thinking about experience. He is trying to map the course of that self-development where experience and its thought are one. M. Clark, *Logic and System*, p. 200.
39. *Hegel's Logic*, p. 247; *Werke* 8, p. 335.
40. *Science of Logic*, p. 671; *Werke* 6, p. 361.
41. 'The Kantian antinomies of reason amount to nothing more than that from a notion first one of its determinations is laid down as basis, and then with equal necessity, the other. In these cases the inadequacy and contingency of a syllogism must not merely be shifted on to the content, as though these defects were independent of the form and the latter alone were the concern of logic. On the contrary it lies in the form of the formal syllogism that the content is such a one-sided quality'. *Science of Logic*, pp. 671-2; *Werke* 8, p. 361.
42. *Science of Logic*, p. 686; *Werke* 6, p. 381.
43. *Science of Logic*, p. 690; *Werke* 6, p. 395.
44. *Hegel's Logic*, p. 253; *Werke* 8, p. 342.
45. 'This . . . syllogism in its turn is no more than the appearance of an inference, since the enumeration of the individuals concerned is only a task involving a progress into the Bad Infinite, and leaving its conclusion always problematic.' J. W. Findlay, *Hegel: A Re-examination*, p. 242.
46. *Science of Logic*, p. 692; *Werke* 6, p. 387.
47. *Hegel's Logic*, p. 254; *Werke* 6, p. 343.
48. 'The inferential defects of the syllogism of reflection can only be cured in the syllogism of necessity, where the middle term is no longer a class or collection, incapable of being exhausted, and therefore incapable of functioning as a true middle, and becomes the essence . . . For Hegel as for Aristotle the knowledge producing

sylogism is one mediated by essential nature J. N. Findlay, *Hegel: A Re-examination*, p. 242.

49. *Science of Logic*, p. 696; *Werke* 6, p. 392.
50. *Science of Logic*, p. 99; *Werke* 6, p. 393.
51. *Science of Logic*, p. 698; *Werke* 6, p. 395.
52. *Science of Logic*, p. 701; *Werke* 6, p. 399.
53. C. Taylor, *Hegel*, p. 314.
54. *Science of Logic*, p. 702; *Werke* 6, p. 399.
55. *Science of Logic*, p. 761; *Werke* 6, p. 469.
56. *Science of Logic*, p. 818; *Werke* 6, p. 541.
57. *Hegel's Logic*, p. 279; *Werke* 8, p. 373.
58. *Science of Logic*, p. 781; *Werke* 6, p. 469.
59. *Science of Logic*, p. 764; *Werke* 6, p. 472.
60. *Hegel's Logic*, p. 282; *Werke* 8, p. 376.
61. *Hegel's Logic*, p. 282; *Werke* 8, p. 377.
65. L. Feuerbach, *Gedanken über Tod und Unsterblichkeit, Sämtliche werke*, Bd 11, ed. Bolin and Jodl, Frommann Verlag, Stuttgart Bad Cannstatt, 1959, p. 194.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 218.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 226.
65. K. Marx, 'Critique of Hegelian Philosophy' in *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1970, p. 181; *Marx-Engels Werke*, Ergänzungsband I, p. 578. 'To say that man is a corporeal, living, real, sensuous, objective being full of natural vigour is to say that he has real, sensuous, objects as the objects of his being or of his life, or that he can only express his life in real, sensuous objects. To be objective, natural and sensuous, and at the same time to have object, nature and sense outside oneself, or oneself to be object, nature and since for a third party, is one and the same thing. Hunger is a natural need; it therefore needs a nature outside itself, and object outside itself, in order to satisfy itself, to be stilled.'
- L. Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, tr. M. H. Vogel, Bobbs-Merrill, New York, 1966, p. 51; *Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. 11, p. 296. 'Only a sensuous being is a true and real being. Only through the senses, and not through thought for itself, is an object given in a true sense . . . a real object is given to me only where a being that affects me is given to me and where my self-activity . . . finds its boundary or resistance in the activity or another being.'
66. See S. Haack, *Deviant Logic*, Cambridge University Press, 1974, and W. V. Quine, *Philosophy of Logic*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1970.

5

The Meaning of *Aufhebung* and *Vorstellung* in Hegel's Philosophy

Despite appearances to the contrary Hegel was not a person to use words casually or carelessly. He delighted in their skilful and ingenious use. His obscurity often stems, therefore, not so much from a failure to find the *mot juste* in a particular context as from a certain over-precision in his use of terms. As anyone who is familiar with his work will know, Hegel developed and used his own specialized philosophical vocabulary. However, it was not a vocabulary which aimed at overturning all received and established philosophical meanings. For Hegel was, above all, immensely well-read in philosophy. He had studied avidly and assiduously all the major (and a large number of the less well-known ones as well) philosophers from the Greeks onward. He was as a result, thoroughly familiar with their works. Indeed his great erudition can but amaze, and be the envy of, the contemporary philosopher. So familiar was Hegel with the works of his forerunners, and so familiar with these works did he expect his audience to be, that he rarely makes specific reference to any philosopher whose doctrine he happens to be discussing. Hegel expects that, as a matter of course, everyone knows which philosopher is occupying his attention. It is in this spirit that Hegel develops his terminology.

Nowadays Hegel's erudition appears to be beyond us or, if it is not beyond us, such erudition is not seen to matter so much. Whereas once comprehensive, encyclopaedic knowledge had been the standard at which to aim, greater and greater specialization is now the accepted goal. Inevitably therefore we find Hegel's philosophy obscure because references are implicit rather than explicit. He shows a facility with each philosophical doctrine which is now confined to experts in those fields. The

concepts which he developed in his attempts to get to grips with the whole variety of doctrines tend to pass way above our heads. It is only gradually, as we become more familiar with his system, that we come to terms with them.

Vorstellung and *Aufheben* are concepts which fall into this category. They are concepts whose significance – in true dialectical fashion – is only revealed in the course of the argument. Hegel's treatment of the two terms illuminates his whole approach. *Vorstellung*, Hegel associates with individual phases and doctrines found in the history of philosophy. Kant, for example, is criticized at certain instances for remaining at the level of *Vorstellen*. What we make of this depends, of course, on what we know of Kant's philosophy. We have always to be alive to the historical allusion in Hegel's use of these terms. But there is also something more to the use that Hegel makes of these terms. They are in addition key concepts in the construction of his philosophical system. Hegel sees them not simply as useful terms which make sense of and thereby advance philosophical thinking but also as concepts whose own internal dialectical construction illustrates the truth of his system. They are key philosophical terms because they bring out key philosophical arguments. They are invaluable to him in making certain methodological points and have important features which match well with the whole tenor of his system. Hegel is, of course, an idealist philosopher who believes, as he tells us in the *Logic*, that a 'philosophy which ascribes true, final and absolute being to the finite determinate thing as such does not deserve the name of philosophy'.¹ An important feature of key philosophical terms in his view, therefore, is that they lend support to the idealist. Indeed such key terms must point the way to idealist conclusions; and this is certainly so, Hegel argues, for the terms *Aufheben* and *Vorstellung*.

The German sense of these terms is of course important for us here. One single translation of the terms, like 'overcoming' for *Aufhebung*, certainly will not do. We have to get nearer the mark than that. Hegel prides himself on having taught philosophy to speak German. Kant, he believes, had properly introduced philosophy to the German language, so the task Hegel saw before himself was the one of making philosophy thoroughly at home in the language. This signified to Hegel that all types of philosophical argument had to be expressed in the native tongue. Loan

words naturally were permissible,² but the true purpose of a German philosopher in his view was to bring out the philosophical potential already inherent in his own language. It goes without saying that *Aufheben* and *Vorstellung*, according to Hegel, have that potential. In the preface to the second edition of the *Logic* Hegel brings up this issue of language and philosophy. He argues that a well developed language is the foundation of all good philosophy. It is important, he says:

That in a language the determinations of thought are presented in substantives and verbs, and so stamped out into objective forms . . . In this the German language has many advantages over the other modern languages; many of its words even have the further property of not only having differing meanings but also opposed meanings. So there is in the language itself a speculative element which ought not to be ignored. It can give great pleasure to speculative thinking to come across such words and to discover the unity of opposites lexically . . . naively already as one word with the opposite meanings.³

The idea of the unity of opposites represents to Hegel one of the most important points of his dialectic. He regards the German language therefore as to some extent being already dialectical before the philosopher sets to work on it or, more precisely, with it. It is a natural advantage of the language that it possesses such words with opposed meanings, and it is a natural advantage of which Hegel intends making use.

This is why Hegel alights with such pleasure on the word *Aufheben*. Now, no student of Hegel can afford to be without a clear idea of the senses in which Hegel uses this term. As Hegel himself suggests, it is one of the most significant terms in his philosophy. But one thing has to be made clear at the outset. There is, I believe, no adequate direct translation of the term into the English language. To be sure many attempts have been made to translate the word satisfactorily and, indeed, any translator is under an obligation to make this attempt. It is part and parcel of his craft to attempt to translate the apparently untranslatable. But here, I think, he has to admit defeat. No one word will do for the Hegelian concept *Aufheben*. This is clear from even the best efforts so far. The artificially coined 'sublate' may help to convey the specialized philosophical meaning but it cannot approach the concrete meanings of *Aufheben* which Hegel sometimes relies on

as well. Martin Nicolaus's more recent attempt to translate the term, apparently on the authority of Marx, as 'suspension' also misses the mark.⁴ To some extent this translation manages to convey the ambiguity of the original but *Aufheben* has an air of finality about it to which 'suspension' is not often appropriate. There is a world of difference between a law which is suspended and one which is abolished – which *Aufheben* may be taken to mean. I am afraid that there is no way out for us other than to bear in mind the range of meanings of the word.

It is here that a translator's dictionary will be of some help to us because, naturally, it will list all the more common meanings of the term. If we analyse what is said we shall find that the term has one of two alternative shades of meaning. As is pointed out in Cassell's *German English Dictionary* the word may signify either: to keep; preserve; store away; provide for; reserve; or: to abolish; suspend; repeal; annul; invalidate; break up. What emerges is, and this is what makes it so difficult to translate, that the term has two apparently contradictory meanings. It is, in other words, that those possible meanings of the term listed in the first category are the opposite in their meaning to those listed in the second category. This appears confusing. When, for instance, we hear that it has been decided to preserve an old ship or building we are not inclined to think of them as being on the point of being broken up or removed. But these contradictory meanings lie within the range of *Aufheben*. This is where the problem is posed in its most difficult form for the translator, to whom the two lists simply represent alternative meanings depending on the context in which the word is found. In Hegel's view, however, it is precisely the two contradictory meanings which are of genuine advantage to philosophy. This argument takes some getting used to for philosophers brought up in the analytic tradition. The analytic tradition looks for clarity and simplicity in the use of words; where a word is likely to be ambiguous it should preferably be omitted. But this is a way out that Hegel does not want. He positively favours the word with two contradictory meanings. The two opposed meanings have to be stressed. To adopt the common-sense view and choose one of the opposed meanings, the one thought best suited to the context, would be to miss a wonderful opportunity to take advantage of the dialectic inherent in the living word. *Aufheben* for Hegel does mean both to

preserve and abolish, to keep and to break up, to provide for and nullify. This is why the word gives, as he says, 'great pleasure to speculative thinking'.⁵

That is the gist of a short note Hegel devotes to the term at the end of his discussion of Being in the *Logic*. In his view there is a great difference between calling something *das Aufgehobene* and calling that something nothing. Clearly if we take on the meanings of *Aufheben*: to abolish, annul or break up we would not be all that mistaken in thinking that an *aufgehobene* thing was in fact nothing. But the great difference in Hegel's view between an *aufgehobene* thing and simply nothing is that nothing is immediate (*unmittelbar*) and an *aufgehobene* thing is, on the other hand, mediate (*vermittelt*).⁶ And a mediate thing is neither simply nothing nor simply being. In a word then, Hegel wants us to think of a thing or object which is *aufgehoben* as both abolished and preserved. Therefore in any concrete instance of the use of the term we have to think of the two opposed meanings as coinciding.

Hegel gives this explanation of his use of the term at the end of his account of Being in the *Logic* because, he claims, the notion *Aufheben* precisely describes the nature of Becoming. This is a notion that takes us right to the heart of Hegel's system. Hegel declares his support for the Heraclitean notion of Becoming, as we have seen, in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* and it is much the same notion we find in the *Logic*. Becoming in general is, Hegel argues, a continual process of the old both being destroyed and preserved. It is a continual change which (and here the debt to Heraclitus is clear) is not the mere disappearance of the existing world but also its renovation. This is the source of the dialectical power of the term *Aufheben*. It catches the true nature of Being. Being, in Hegel's view, is not one unchanged, eternal state of affairs. It is the continual transition of Being into nothing and nothing into Being. It is, in other words, the unceasing process of the *Aufhebung* of all apparently fixed states. Here we are reminded of Marx's comments on dialectic in his Preface to the second German edition of *Capital*. Dialectic, Marx claims, whilst comprehending the affirmative side of the present state of affairs also recognizes the transient, negative side of existing conditions and discovers in it the seeds of a new world. It sees the whole in a fluid movement. And it is to such a view of things that

the notion of *Aufheben* is invaluable. It conveys destruction, but without complete negation, and it conveys preservation, but without stagnation. In short, the notion for both Marx and Hegel corresponds with the fluid nature of the world we experience. It is important to bear in mind, however, that Hegel's use of the term is not entirely the same as that of Marx. Marx, as we shall see, associates a dialectical understanding with the concrete task of creating a new society. For Hegel, on the other hand, the use and significance of dialectic is closely intertwined with philosophical idealism. The way in which Hegel employs the notion *Aufhebung* therefore is not entirely critical. Indeed at an important point in his philosophy the instrument of dialectic becomes blunt. We can best see how this happens by looking at Hegel's discussion of the finite (*das Endliche*) in the *Science of Logic*.

The central concept in Hegel's analysis of the finite in the *Logic* is the concept of limit or barrier (*Grenze* or *Schranke*). To begin with Hegel rightly points out that something defines itself by its limits. This much is as true in the human sphere as the natural sphere. In human society, for instance, an individual preserves his identity by rejecting or excluding those features and characteristics he thinks not properly to belong to him. Identities are established in a negative fashion, as Hegel says, they are 'the non-being of the other'.⁷ A pear is a pear by virtue of its excluding from itself all those properties which might individually characterize any other species of its genus. It is not round, for instance, like an apple, nor does it have a thick bright skin like an orange. We have only to try to define an object like this for ourselves to see the truth of what Hegel is saying.

This is one side of things. The finite thing preserves itself through its limits. But there is, according to Hegel, a negative side to this situation as well. There is also, he claims, an inevitable tension between the thing and its limits. This is a difficult argument to follow. Each thing, he says, is what it is through what it is not; but this appears to contradict its independent identity. This identity simply exists through difference. It is as though we suddenly discover we are not in fact different from others, because it is they in truth who define what is different.⁸ The limits therefore which formerly appeared to assure our complete independence now appear as what they indeed are: limits or barriers. I am, for instance, known for being an exces-

sively heavy drinker and I like it like that because it makes me stand out in what is by and large a jovial group of people. But suppose, overnight, I find myself in amongst a totally different group of people, a group which thinks excessive drinking is a sin. Those previous characteristics which had helped the individual to stand out amongst a former group of friends becomes a handicap. They become more obviously what they were in the first place: limits. But, in Hegel's view, the repentant drunkard need not feel himself to be an exception in this. He argues that it is a contradiction in which all finite things find themselves. It is the contradiction within the finite thing 'which sends it beyond itself';⁹ for the qualities which limit a thing not only preserve it but also, eventually destroy it. This is the dialectic of limit or barrier. The limit marks out or distinguishes a finite thing. It is what makes it individual and unique. Yet it is, at the same time, what causes it to perish. The finite thing comes up against its limit. This, Hegel claims, is the fate of any individual, particular thing. It is, inevitably, *aufgehoben*.

This means, as we have seen, that the individual particular thing we experience is both destroyed and preserved. Hegel argues that such a finite thing is preserved in the infinite which is, we discover, the continual process of the finite negating itself. The infinite therefore because it is the embodiment of the finite is as 'the negation of the negation, the affirmative'.¹⁰ We shall look in detail at the implications of this phrase for Hegel and Marx. What needs to be brought out here is Hegel's suggestion that the finite is only preserved in its mediate form. What Hegel means by 'mediate form' in this instance is complex. What we can first of all be sure it means is that the individual particular thing is destroyed as a perceived object of the senses. In that sense, the thing ceases to exist. It is more difficult, in the second place, to tell what is preserved. The infinite is, it seems, simply the process of the finite ceasing to be and coming to be. According to Hegel it is nothing tangible. His argument is, it appears, that what is preserved is the concept of the finite thing. This concept, he suggests, is its reality.

This is not what we would expect. If we follow Hegel's argument that when a finite thing ceases to be there is both a negative and positive outcome it is not likely that we would discount all the empirical factors in relating the positive outcome. After all

when a thing is destroyed it is not merely its concept that is preserved. We would agree that where a church is destroyed by a fire its concept remains but we would also see that there were other 'remains'. Indeed it might be that some of them would be used as a foundation or a new church. If people began to think less well of the church it could still be that some of the physical features of the building would be preserved to form the basis of some other building. But in Hegel's dialectic the empirical thing is not preserved as a transformed empirical thing. Hegel takes no account of the empirical outcome of the destruction of a thing. It is simply destroyed (*aufgehoben*) and that is the end of it. It may be that it is preserved in a ghost-like fashion in its concept but this comes nowhere near the true state of affairs. Ideas are not the only outcome of physical destruction. But Hegel by the clever use of *Aufheben* hopes to show this is so. The finite thing is destroyed, he suggests, but its idea is preserved. Hegel has slipped up here however. What he has done is to stress the one concrete meaning of *Aufheben*: to destroy at the expense of the other concrete meaning: to preserve. It is true that at the abstract level Hegel maintains a balance: the notion of 'finite' is, as we have seen, both overcome and preserved. But this does not make Hegel's analysis any the less wrong. He concludes that 'the finite is ideal',¹¹ but had he been consistent and held to the two concrete meanings of *Aufheben* Hegel might have to have reconsidered his idealism. *Aufheben*, as Hegel himself admits, can mean a thing is maintained as well as removed. But Hegel loses sight of this at the empirical level and decides 'not to recognize the finite as a truly existing thing.'¹²

Hegel's use of the term *Aufheben* is then, as we can see, closely connected with the general presentation of his philosophical view. The concept, he claims, is itself dialectical. On the one hand it can signify the inevitable transience of a thing and on the other – and this at the very same time – it can signify its preservation. The concept can therefore supply a movement and flow to an argument which corresponds with the movement and flow of the real world. One stage in an argument may be superseded but at the same time, because it is both superseded and maintained, provide the basis for the next stage of the argument. This method of presentation is very much in evidence in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* where the break up (*Aufhebung*) of one form of conscious-

ness provides the basis for the new mode of consciousness. The transition from stoicism to scepticism early in the work is perhaps the best example of this. In the second place, Hegel suggests, the notion of *Aufhebung* itself leads to an idealist point of view. *Das Aufgehobene* is in his view synonymous with *das Ideelle* (the ideal).¹³ And here I do not think Hegel's argument is as convincing. It appears that the term has to carry too much weight at this point, a weight which it cannot carry without shedding some of its meanings. *Aufheben* can be used to mean the destruction of a thing and its preservation at a higher level. But its idealist use relies too heavily on one aspect of its meaning, namely, the aspect which signifies the concrete negation of a thing. This is the use to which Hegel puts *Aufheben* when he suggests that philosophical analysis 'raises up' (a literal translation of the term) the things of common-sense experience to their conceptual truth. Here, Hegel implies, concrete things are what they really are: ideas.

Marx shares the spirit of Hegel's analysis of *aufheben*. Several of the transitions in *Capital* rely on the notion that what has been discussed previously, though now passed over and completed, none the less enters into the present discussion. Although Marx completes his discussion of the commodity with his account of commodity fetishism, the discussion and its conclusion none the less remain the basis of the next topic Marx raises, namely, the money-form. In one sense the commodity has been fully dealt with but it is still a topic of analysis in its 'sublated' form, since money for Marx is identical with 'the circulation of commodities'.¹⁴ At a more dramatic level the 'spirit' of Hegel's analysis of *Aufheben* is also evident in Marx's analysis of the transition from one economic system to another and, in particular, the transition from capitalism to socialism. Marx warns not of a clean break with the past economic forms but a break which must perforce show elements of continuity. He says in the 'Critique of the Gotha Programme' when dealing with the document's account of the rise of socialism:

What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has developed on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it emerges from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birth mark of the old society from whose womb it emerges.¹⁵

Thus for Marx the destruction of capitalist society by socialism

cannot be wholly a process of demolition nor of construction. In the process of destruction socialists will inevitably have to work with many of the old materials, giving them a new form. With Marx also we can see that the dialectical process of *Aufhebung* in no way does away with the concrete world since the same material problems remain for a socialist society, it is merely that they will be tackled in a new and different way.

Hegel employs the notion *Vorstellung* in much the same kind of way. But the analysis he makes of the concept is perhaps more fruitful. Although the notion of *Vorstellung*, as Malcolm Clark has pointed out,¹⁶ plays an important role in all parts of Hegel's system, it is in the *Phenomenology* that its meaning is of most significance. Needless to say, the translation of this term also presents peculiar difficulties. *Vorstellung* (like *Aufhebung*) is a compound word made up of the preposition *vor* which means simply in front of or before, and the noun *Stellung* which means position or placement. Naturally Hegel is not indifferent to the literal meaning of *Vorstellung* when he employs the term so that in his use of it we would expect that he intends an admixture of its abstract connotation – idea or conception, and its more literal connotation – position in front of. In the *Phenomenology* Hegel employs *Vorstellung* to describe the ideas that the natural consciousness (which forms the starting point of the work) has of its inorganic nature, or what Hegel also calls its substance. The inorganic nature of the natural consciousness is its cultural context. Those who are familiar with the *Phenomenology* may recall that the natural consciousness is one of the principal subjects of the work and from this point of view Hegel sees it as the purpose of the *Phenomenology* to raise the natural consciousness to science. The natural consciousness sets out from sense-certainty, sharing in what Hegel calls an unconceptualized (*unbegriffene*) fashion the 'spirit of the age'. There is no difficulty in understanding what Hegel means by the spirit of the age. The phrase has very much the same meaning nowadays. It is the spirit of the age, Hegel argues, which forms the inorganic nature or 'substance' of their natural consciousness. It is inorganic to the natural consciousness because it is a set of common meanings which is not properly understood. Now the suggestion that Hegel makes is that the ideas that the natural consciousness has of the 'spirit of the age' or its substance are, in fact, *Vorstellungen*. *Vorstellungen*, Hegel

claims, are ideas that take on their form externally to my thinking. They are for that reason, Hegel argues, ideas which I have not reflected upon. This is an important, if obscure point. It is only by understanding it that we will discover the meaning of *Vorstellungen* in Hegel's system.

Hegel is essentially critical of the form of thought which relies on *Vorstellungen*. This criticism can, I believe, be understood in two ways. *Vorstellungen*, Hegel says are ideas which take on their form externally to my thought. In the first place this can be taken to mean that Hegel associates thinking which merely consists of such ideas with bifurcation (*Entzweiung*). We have to look to one of Hegel's early works, the essay on the *Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie*, to discover the meaning of this term. Bifurcated thinking, we discover, is thinking which according to Hegel is always bound up with otherness or alienation, and is therefore unable to restore the shattered harmony of existence. Philosophy, Hegel claims in the essay, both arises from and aims at restoring the harmony of existence and is therefore directed against thinking which is bifurcated. He says in the essay:

If we look more closely at the particular form which a philosophy takes we see it, on the one hand, as springing from the living originality of spirit which has produced it and self-actively formed it within the sheltered harmony. On the other hand we can see it as springing from one particular form which bifurcation takes from which the system proceeds. Bifurcation is the *source of philosophy* and is in the culture of the age the unfreely given side of the form. In culture that which is the appearance of the absolute is isolated from the absolute and fixed as something independent . . . To dissolve such hard and fast oppositions is the sole interest of reason.¹⁷

Philosophy represents the autonomous activity of the mind, but the philosopher's thinking does not take place in a vacuum. The philosopher's system, in Hegel's view, arises from the bifurcated nature of the world (of the understanding) as it is experienced in that age. The general form in which that bifurcation is experienced is represented by the culture of the time. The philosopher tries to rise above bifurcation in his system, but to do this he has to master both the divisions of his cultural milieu and the fixed conceptions of the understanding. Hegel attributes to the representative (*vorstellende*) thinking of the understanding the

traditional oppositions of philosophy: the opposition of spirit and matter, body and soul, freedom and necessity and belief and understanding itself. In any age these oppositions are inevitable for philosophy, but what Hegel wants particularly to overcome is the understanding's 'absolute fixing of this bifurcation'.¹⁸

The first aspect then of Hegel's criticism of *Vorstellungen* is that it is the form in which bifurcated thinking expresses itself. *Vorstellungen* is appropriate to that mode of thinking because it is thinking which assumes that its ideas always reflect an object external to itself. The thinker always supposes that the object about which he is thinking is in some sort of position (*Stellung*) in front of (*vor*) him. The object remains the other of mind. And this for Hegel is the essence of alienation, the assumption that mind and reality are permanently opposed.

But the criticism of *Vorstellungen* has another, perhaps more significant aspect. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *Vorstellungen* are seen as ideas that the natural consciousness has of its inorganic nature. What Hegel appears to mean by the inorganic nature of the natural consciousness is again quite complex. Hegel sees the ordinary consciousness as embodying in a hazily understood manner the 'spirit of the age' or its culture (*Bildung*). This spirit of the age is, he argues, the product of a nation's history and present condition. To some extent therefore, present culture contains within itself all the past forms of culture of the society. But philosophy according to Hegel stands in a privileged relationship to the 'spirit of the age'. The history of philosophy is, he says, 'the innermost soul of world history – this work of the mind of men in his inner thought is parallel with all the stages of reality. No philosophy can go beyond its own time'.¹⁹ Indeed the principal philosophy of an epoch perfectly embodies that spirit, it is in Hegel's own terms its 'self-conscious' expression. Because it is the same self-consciousness of its age philosophy is also therefore the understanding of past forms of culture as they are to be found in existing society. The natural consciousness, however, is in a far less favoured position. Its ideas of past culture are inorganic to itself because they only become part of its make-up through the general climate of the time. In other words, the natural consciousness simply receives ideas of those past forms as part and parcel of living in the age. So in this other sense as well as *Vorstellungen* of the natural consciousness are ideas which are external to the

thinker. In this second instance, therefore, Hegel's criticism of *Vorstellungen* is that they tend to reflect too readily the preconceptions of the age. This does not mean that *Vorstellungen* of the natural consciousness are merely prejudices. Hegel insists that they are ideas which take on an objective form for their thinker. If we employ a term which is perhaps nearest to the original, representation, we might say *Vorstellungen* are the ideas in which the ordinary consciousness represents to the world itself. It is the world as it genuinely imagines it to be.²⁰

Hegel does not, as I have suggested, use terms in a casual way and some of the more important terms in his system provide a key to the understanding of its more complex aspects. This applies particularly to the role of *Vorstellung* in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, because the phenomenological method is directly intended to overcome the representations (i.e., *Vorstellungen*) which are the mainstay of the natural consciousness.²¹ Looking closely at Hegel's use of *Vorstellungen* allows us also to analyse one of the principal purposes of *Phenomenology*, and, because Hegel regards the work as an introduction to his system, gives us a clearer picture of his use of dialectic.

Hegel inveighs most heavily against the reliance on *Vorstellungen* in the first volume of the *Encyclopaedia* where he says:

Since the determinations of feeling, perception, desire and will, etc., are, in so far as we are aware of them, generally called representations [*Vorstellungen*] thus it can on the whole be said that the philosophy puts thoughts, categories or more accurately concepts [*Begriffe*] in the place of representations. Representations can be seen as the metaphors of thought and concepts. So that to have representations is not, however, to imply that we appreciate their intellectual significance nor yet the thoughts and concepts to which they correspond.²²

In the modern era representations (*Vorstellungen*) are the unavoidable starting points of philosophy. (Marx, as we shall see, was to say the same of political economy.) Everyone has his own idea of how this or that is constituted. These familiar ideas have to be scrutinized and developed into genuine thoughts. But *Vorstellungen* have their role to play as the mediating point between mere impressions and genuine self-consciousness. In the third volume of the *Encyclopaedia* Hegel refers to this point as 'the remembered impression (*Anschauung*) . . . the mine and yours

(*das Ihrige*) intelligence'.²³ Through representations the intellect first begins to make itself feel at home in the world. For this reason *Vorstellungen* should never be overlooked.

For Hegel *Vorstellungen* have, as we have seen, two essential features. They are, in the first place, the ideas of an alienated, bifurcated experience. In the second place they are what we might now know as ideological ideas, ideas which do not represent a worked-out personal point of view but rather simply reflect the society in which we live.²⁴ The aim of the *Phenomenology* is accordingly to show the natural consciousness how to re-appropriate those ideas which it has merely accepted in order that it may properly be at home with them. Hegel describes this process as re-appropriation because with it, he believes, the distinction between self and the other of self is broken up. The assumption that lies at the basis of the *vorstellende* mode of thought, that the subject is confronted with a particular, distinct external object, is at last retracted. But this now leads us on to the definition of understanding and reason. For, in Hegel's view, the distinguishing mark of understanding is the activity of breaking down *Vorstellungen*. Understanding, he argues, consists of 'breaking down a conception into its original elements' and thereby 'revoking the form of its being familiar or well-known'.²⁵ Through separating and sifting out the ideas of the natural consciousness the understanding makes the world of the natural consciousness appear unreal. And this power of the understanding, Hegel continues, 'is the most amazing and greatest of powers or rather the absolute power'.²⁶ Understanding, he further claims, 'looks the negative in the face, stays with it'.²⁷ This description makes little sense unless we realize that what Hegel means by the negative is, in fact, external reality. The whole of the immensely detailed empirical world of common-sense experience is to Hegel a negative and initially alien world.

Hegel derives the distinction between reason and understanding from Kant's philosophy. Kant distinguishes between the two by describing 'the understanding as . . . the faculty of rules' and 'reason . . . the faculty of principles'.²⁸ Kant suggests there are three faculties of knowledge standing in a hierarchical order, with sensing (*Anschaung*) at the bottom, understanding in an intermediate position and reason at the head. Whereas the faculty of sense gives mere intuitions, the understanding provides

categories enabling a judgement to be made. The judgements of the understanding provide the basis for our everyday and scientific knowledge. Reason represents a further layer upon this ordering in that it is the faculty which seeks to draw together the judgements of understanding. Kant provides a fuller account of this distinction at the end of the subsection on 'Reason in general' in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. 'Understanding,' he says here 'may be regarded as a faculty which secures the unity of appearances by means of rules, and reason as being the faculty which secures the unity of the rules of understanding under principles. Accordingly, reason never applies itself directly to experience or to any object, but to understanding, in order to give the manifold knowledge of the latter an *a priori* unity by means of concepts, a unity which may be called the unity of reason, and which is quite different in kind from any unity that can be accomplished by the understanding'.²⁹ Kant believes, as we have seen, that reason has a legitimate use as a faculty of knowledge in bringing coherence and shape to the concepts of the understanding. In this *regulative* use reason does not overstep its bounds. However, reason can be put to an illegitimate *constitutive* use when it seeks to impute to objects the conditions of its own working.

Although Hegel accepts Kant's broad distinction between the understanding and the reason, he is highly critical of the way in which Kant presents it. Hegel cannot accept Kant's view that reason has only a legitimate regulative use in terms of our knowledge. He provides a detailed criticism of Kant's philosophy in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. He is first of all disturbed by the way in which Kant comes across reason. Kant, Hegel says, 'hunts through the sack of the soul to see what faculties are left there, and thus by merest chance lights upon reason'.³⁰ In Hegel's view, Kant proceeds in too empirical a fashion. Kant is too kind to the world of things, instead of seeing the world in the light of reason as inherently contradictory, Kant to Hegel's amazement attributes the contradictions to reason itself.³¹ Antinomies (or contradictions) are, Hegel thinks, to be found in our experience and they should not be resolved as Kant suggests by attributing them to the over-ambitious or the transcendent use of reason. Reason no more than depicts the paradoxes that face the rational, self-conscious person. These paradoxes can be resolved only by regarding reason as genuinely constitutive, as bringing harmony

to our experience through its synthesizing concepts. Understanding, Hegel suggests, brings out the contradictory nature of our experience, the task of reason is to resolve (*aufheben*) these contradictions.

The understanding is therefore the power of working with all the rich data of experience. This is what Hegel means when he claims in the *Phenomenology* that the understanding stays with the negative (*bei ihm verweilt*). Indeed its 'absolute' power consists of its ability to push the division between mind and reality to its extreme limit. The understanding is not only the alienation of mind but the consciousness of that alienation. In the *Philosophy of Nature* Hegel refers to nature 'estranged from the idea (of reason)' as only the 'corpse of the understanding'.³² This enigmatic expression shows how Hegel connects understanding both with the experience of estrangement (for him synonymous with the externality of the world) and with its overcoming. Where a thing reaches its limit in the Hegelian dialectic it undergoes a qualitative transformation. As we have seen, it is *aufgehoben*. It is in other words destroyed in its old form and preserved in a new one. This is what happens to the understanding now. For, Hegel claims, it 'only gains its truth in that it finds itself in the absolute division' that it itself posits.³³ According to Hegel it was Kant who, making the assumption that experience might be divided into *a priori* ideas and impressions provided by the faculty of sense, derived a notion of the understanding as the unifying activity of the subject or, what Hegel and Fichte simply call, the I or ego (*das Ich*). The importance of Kant's derivation in Hegel's view was that the world 'without' was shown to be subjective or a product of the mind. Kant proves that the objective world which the understanding describes with the categories is a world that is organized by the ego itself, or, as Kant calls it, the unity of apperception.³⁴ This is how, in Hegel's view, the understanding finds itself in that absolute division which is of its own making. Hegel might readily quote Kant himself here who says in the *Critique of Reason*:

Thus the order and regularity in the appearances, which we entitle nature, we ourselves introduce. We could never find them in appearances, had not we ourselves, or the nature of mind, originally set them there.³⁵

The understanding discovers that its very own concepts make possible the notion of an external world. With this however, it is

no longer understanding; it has become reason.

It is the revocation of the representational ideas (*Vorstellungen*) of the natural consciousness that puts us in this position. Reason is not simply a higher form of consciousness than understanding; it supersedes it. It takes over, according to Hegel, the truth of the representational ideas whilst at the same time denying them absolute reality. He tries to illuminate this process in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* by contrasting the form of philosophical study in modern times with that practised in ancient Greece. In ancient times, Hegel suggests, the problem was to educate thoroughly the natural consciousness. In order that this might be achieved the natural consciousness was encouraged to reflect on its own activities and indeed all else that might crop up in its life (Hegel appears to have the Socratic method in mind here). On the other hand, Hegel thinks that in modern times the 'individual finds the abstract form already prepared'.³⁶ The individual's effort to make his own, to understand it, is not therefore an effort to raise him from the concrete and manifold to the abstract, but to make known what is already internal to himself, in other words, to make his abstract ideas concrete. What has happened with the general development of culture from Greek times onward is that the ordinary consciousness has become not so much sunk in its own particular existence as unaware of the existence of the general level of consciousness in itself.

Therefore the work we have to do now is not so much to purify the individual from the immediate sensuous manner and to make him into thought and thinking substance as much more than the opposite: through overcoming fixed, determinate thoughts we have to give reality to the universal, infuse it with the spirit.³⁷

The ordinary individual in the modern world already has a complex and sophisticated view of life. It is, as we have seen, a consciousness that contains within itself, as its inorganic nature, all previous forms of culture. Now Hegel argues that these past forms exist in consciousness as remembered in themselves (*erinnerte an sich*). They are the form in which *Vorstellungen* come to exist for the ordinary consciousness. What Hegel suggests here is that it is not sufficient that the understanding analyse these received forms, breaking them down into their constituent parts, they have also to be rendered fluid or 'infused with spirit'. This is the role of reason. The attainment of this goal is, however, a far

more difficult task than what Hegel calls education from sensuous immediacy because the activity of the understanding itself has to be superseded; and it is this, in the thinking activity of the understanding, that the I has its certainty. This presents an obstacle to reason because the I has a vanity towards the particular conceptions that it holds. The natural consciousness of the modern epoch has no objection to the educational process of the *Phenomenology* in so far as it points out the content of its experience through reviving and analysing the past forms that provide its background. However, it stops short at the point where its own fixed thoughts are abrogated, where the contemporary (and apparently absolute) significance of its ideas is not only questioned but also denied, because it is in those ideas that the individual finds his or her certainty. Reason has, nevertheless, to overcome this dogmatism of the understanding. This is achieved, according to Hegel, where thinking abstracts itself from mere certainty, in other words, of wanting to know things are as they are. What is asked is not that the consciousness set to one side its self in thinking; this would be contrary to the whole spirit of Hegel's philosophy. Reality has to have the significance of the I for Hegel.³⁸ Rather what is asked is that the subject 'give up the fixity of the activity of positing itself' just as much as it 'gives up the fixity of the pure concrete'.³⁹ What Hegel demands is that the subject, to transcend mere understanding, give up the stance or assumption of the absolute division of subject and object. It is this assumption of a fixed subject and a fixed world which, though essential in the process of knowing, reason has to transcend.

The stance 'which is I itself in opposition to a different content'⁴⁰ is necessary, in Hegel's view, when we embark on philosophy but in the course of philosophical development we are shown that the stance is inadequate. This we would expect in Hegel as an opponent of materialism. But there are also positive points to his criticism of dualism. In reason the notion of a world external to mind is, Hegel thinks, set aside and in setting aside this notion the vanity of the I is overcome or, in Hegel's words, its fixity in positioning itself. This has its result that the subject's ideas become fully fluid, because its world has become fully fluid. 'It is through this movement', Hegel says, that the understanding's 'pure thoughts become concepts and are for the first time what they are in truth, self-movement, circles, that which their

Substance is, spiritual essentialities'.⁴¹ The transition from *Vorstellungen* to *Begriffe* is now complete. The world of reason is a world simply of synthesizing ideas which encompasses both the difference between thought and its object and its overcoming. On these grounds, Hegel concludes the rational subject has no desire to settle at any particular conception because the subject has attained a consciousness of consciousness or is now pure self-consciousness. Genuine knowledge for Hegel is not a knowledge 'of' something, it is a knowledge of the process of knowing or a knowledge of concepts. 'This movement of pure essences,' he says, 'constitutes the nature of scientific method in general'.⁴²

The analysis of Hegel's critique of *Vorstellen* leads us to the heart of his system and dialectical method. There are several other key terms in Hegel's system which lead us in the same direction. *Aufhebung* is, as we have seen, one such term. This stems from the fact that Hegel does not use terms casually. He often uses them in a skilful and ingenious way to illuminate and illustrate his dialectical method. This suggests that we should be extremely cautious in dealing with the undoubted obscurity of Hegel's philosophy. At times our inability to comprehend may well disguise a failure to come to terms with the more profound and intricate parts of his system.

However, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, always to explain Hegel's point in his own terms. Hegel seems to suggest at the conclusion of his analysis of *Vorstellen*, that an individual who attains the level of reason would not wish to take any fixed standpoint in the world of ideas. The rational person is one who contents himself/herself with the comprehension of the world of ideas. Each position within that world will be seen as a product of its time and circumstances and its inherent limitations exposed. The view is not one that is self-evidently clear, but an illuminating parallel with Hegel's position can, I think, be found in Karl Mannheim's theory of ideology. Mannheim sees ideology as a product of the natural consciousness of the time. Each person is inevitably caught (as Hegel argues) in the thinking of his or her time. For the analyst this seems to present an insuperable obstacle to the attainment of knowledge. But with Mannheim this comes within the analyst's grasp when 'the total conception of ideology is being used' and 'he has the courage to subject not just the adversary's point of view but all points of view, including his

own, to the ideological analysis'.⁴³ This conclusion, although not entirely worded in the same terms as Hegel's phenomenological method, allows us to shed some light on Hegel's apparently odd suggestion that reason attacks the vanity of the ego. With Mannheim, it is clear that the ego is under threat because the subject's own identity is linked to the spirit of his age. To reflect on an identity which is more inherited than personally acquired can be interpreted as affecting a person's vanity. Hegel appears to have something like this in mind when he refers to reason's critical power and his desire to see subject and object as interwoven.

This parallel with Mannheim's sociology of knowledge may appear somewhat strained, but we must not lose sight of Hegel's objectives in analysing the representational (or *vorstellende*) mode of thought. Hegel's purpose is to undermine both the alienating and misleading aspects of representational thinking. However the misleading aspect of representational thinking arises primarily from its being the received wisdom of an era or its natural consciousness. So Hegel's efforts to devise a scientific (*wissenschaftlich*) method that overturns the (*vorstellende*) mode of thought is very closely related to Mannheim's efforts to devise a successful theory of ideology. Mannheim's purpose is to gain an insight into the standpoint of each and every individual in his time and Hegel's purpose is, as he puts it in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, to create 'this pathway, through the movement of the concept [*Begriffe*] [which] will encompass the entire sphere of secular consciousness in its necessary development'.⁴⁴ Reason with which Hegel subverts the everyday representational reality of the understanding through what we might anachronistically call a theory of ideology. He thus paves the way for Marx's critical, more explicitly social use of the dialectical method. Hegel's attack on the rigidities of representational thinking is the precursor of Marx's theory of ideology and his account of commodity fetishism. Conventional understanding is for both Hegel and Marx too closely wedded to its age. The first task of any account of experience which aims at objectivity is to strip away this conventional understanding to make room for knowledge.

Here Hegel's and Marx's thinking connects once again with ancient dialectic. Plato's theory of knowledge was founded on a similar suspension of the claims of conventional thinking. The myth of the cave in the *Republic* gives expression to this doubt. For

Plato the ordinary individual's understanding of the world is similar to that of prisoners chained with their faces to the wall of a cave who see only the shadows of individuals milling around them. These shadows are cast by a fire some way away behind them in the cave. The task of the person pursuing knowledge is to free himself or herself from this bondage in order not only to observe directly the fire and the other occupants of the cave but also to force themselves up from the cave into the sunlight. The sunlight represents the true knowledge denied to those individuals who are the prisoners of their ordinary experience.⁴⁵

Notes

1. *Wissenschaft der Logik I Werke 5*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt, 1970, p. 172.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
4. Foreword to the *Grundrisse*, Pelican Marx Library, translated by Martin Nicholas, p. 32.
5. *Wissenschaft der Logik I SW 5*, p. 20.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
8. An 'outsider' or a 'dropout' may find himself in this kind of dilemma. He makes a deliberate attempt to cut himself off and be radically different from the rest of society. But he cannot get out of the fact that it is the rest of society which determines what is radically different.
9. *Wissenschaft der Logik I*, p. 138.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 172.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
14. *Capital I*, p. 94; *Das Kapital*, p. 109.
15. Marx-Engels, *Selected Works in One Volume*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1968, p. 323.
16. *Logic and System: A Study of the Transition from 'Vorstellung' to thought in the Philosophy of Hegel* (Nijhoff, The Hague). See especially pp. 23-38 and pp. 50-66.
17. *Werke 2*, pp. 20-1. Hegel: *The Difference between the Fichtean and Schellingian Systems of Philosophy*, tr. J. P. Surber, Ridgeview, Reseda, California, 1978, pp. 10-11. Raymond Plant also brings out the importance of the idea of overcoming bifurcation for Hegel's system and deals especially with this passage, saying of it: 'The solution to the problem of fragmentation and dissonance in the modern world is

now seen to be in philosophy, whereas before Hegel had looked for it in political and religious reform'. Hegel, Allen & Unwin, London, p. 79 ff.

18. *Werke*, 2, p. 22. *The Difference between the Fichtean and Schellingian Systems*, p. 11.
19. Hegel, *History of Philosophy*, III, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1968, p. 547; *Werke*, 20, p. 456. The role of the history of philosophy in relation to philosophy is also dealt with on pp. 552-3 and in the *Encyclopaedia I*, paras 13 and 14.
20. M. Clarke, op. cit., 'The Stage of Vorstellung is therefore the first at which one may speak of objectivity . . . Vorstellung must be seen both as thought and as the "other" of thought', p. 28.
21. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 17-20; *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, *Werke*, 3, '[genuine] knowing on the other hand is directed against the familiarity of being acquainted (*Bekannt sein*)' p. 18: p. 35.
22. *Encyclopaedia*, I, para 3.
23. *Encyclopaedia*, II, Para 451.
24. This is a clear point of contact between Hegel and Marx. I am particularly reminded here of Marx's claim in *Capital I*: 'Man's reflections on the forms of social life and consequently also his scientific analysis of these forms take a course directly opposite to that of their actual historical development. He begins, *post festum*, with the results of the process of development ready to hand before him. The characters that stamp products as commodities . . . have already acquired the stability of natural, self-understood forms of social life before man seeks to decipher, not their historical character, for in his eyes they are immutable, but their meaning.' *Capital*, I, p. 75; *Das Kapital*, pp. 89-90. One of Marx's objectives in *Capital*, is to undermine the representative ideas of the economists of the age. The political economists of the day accept too readily their own conceptions (*Vorstellungen*) of society.
25. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 18; *Werke* 3, p. 35. 'The commonest way in which we deceive either ourselves or others about understanding is by assuming something as familiar, and accepting it on that account; with all its pros and cons, such knowing never gets anywhere.'
26. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 18; *Werke* 3, p. 36.
27. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 19; *Werke* 3, p. 36. 'But the life of spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself.'
28. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B356, A300.
29. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B359, A302.
30. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, III, p. 443; *Werke*, p. 351.
31. *History of Philosophy*, III, p. 451; *Werke*, p. 359.
32. *Philosophy of Nature*, *Encyclopaedia*, II, para 247, comment. *Werke* 9, p. 25.
33. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 19; *Werke* 3, p. 36.
34. The 'Transcendental unity of apperception forms out of all possible

appearances, which can stand alongside one another in experience, a connexion of all these representations according to laws.' *Critique of Pure Reason*, A108.

35. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A125.
36. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 19; *Werke* 3, p. 37.
37. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 19; *Werke* 3, p. 37.
38. Hegel makes this point particularly strongly in his criticism of Spinoza's philosophy. Spinoza's notion of substance is, he thinks, too rigid and unyielding: 'All differences and determination of things and of consciousness simply go back into the one substance, one may say that in the system of Spinoza all things are merely cast down into this abyss of annihilation'. *History of Philosophy*, III, p. 288, *Werke* 20, p. 166. This defect can be remedied only by taking substance as subject and infusing reality with spirit. And this is of course what Hegel tries to do in his system. Cf. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 14; *Werke* 3, p. 28.
39. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 20; *Werke* 3, p. 37.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.* *Begriffe* (concepts) therefore 'comprise Hegel's highest group of logical categories, which define nothing less concrete than self-conscious spirit. The notion (*Begriffe*) is therefore Reason and not understanding. It is thought explicitly articulating the unity of thought and being, the movement of spirit's self-negation and self-reconciliation or return upon self.' G. R. G. Mure, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, Oxford, 1965, p. 21.
42. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 20; *Werke* 3, p. 37.
43. K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, p. 69.
44. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 20; *Werke* 3, p. 38.
45. Plato, *Republic*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, pp. 278-86.

6

Dialectic in Marx's *Capital*

In the afterword to the second German edition of *Capital* Marx remarks that the method he employs in the work had been little understood. The same might still be said nowadays. Despite the great interest that has been shown in Marx's economic theory and the revival that has taken place in Marxist economic studies little attention has been given to the status of dialectic in the work, a question which is vital to the manner in which Marx arrives at and presents the conclusions of his economic analysis. This is a surprising omission since, of course, a theorist's conclusions must stand or fall with his method.

Marx's dialectical method in *Capital* bears, it seems, very little relation to the methods of the conventional modern economist. From the viewpoint of the free market economist, especially, Marx's method will appear to have sprung from the most dubious of backgrounds. Indeed he is most likely to see it simply as a philosophical method which Hegel had revived from the metaphysics of ancient Greece and which Marx, for some inexplicable reason, had decided to apply to the political economy of his day. And there is little point in denying that Marx's dialectic does have these origins; it is, as we have seen, a philosophical form of procedure which is employed most extensively in the *Science of Logic* and *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel's major works. Dialectical logic has its origins in the most profound, yet abstruse, of metaphysics. Nevertheless, Marx believes that dialectic, when employed in a critical way, is the only entirely satisfactory method of presenting the results of his economic analysis of capitalist society.

When Marx remarks in the afterword to *Capital* that his method had been little understood he is able to quote a number of reviews

of his book to illustrate the confusion. The *Paris Revue Positiviste* criticizes Marx, in obvious reference to his dialectical method, for dealing with economics metaphysically. And here, of course, the *Revue Positiviste* is only echoing the views of the modern economist. However, Marx is able to reply to the criticism by quoting from a book by Sieber, a Russian economist. According to Marx, Sieber says:

In so far as it deals with actual theory, the method of Marx is the deductive method of the whole English school whose failings and virtues are common to the best theoretic economists.¹

In contrast to the French reviewer, Sieber finds little difference between the procedure Marx adopts and the empiricist procedures of Smith and Ricardo. This, in Marx's view, dismisses the claim that he has dealt with economics entirely metaphysically. Although it has a number of small defects, Marx thinks that the review of the Petersburg *European Messenger* best presents his position and he quotes extensively from it to show how this is so. Now this reviewer is in the first place unable to reconcile Marx's apparently realistic method of enquiry (*Forschungsmethode*) with what he is sure is the German idealistic method of presentation (*Darstellungsmethode*).

At first sight, the author says, if the judgement is based on the external form of presentation of the subject, Marx is the most ideal of ideal philosophers (*grosse Idealphilosoph*), always in the German, i.e., the bad sense of the word.²

But Marx thinks this is a difficulty the author himself resolves in a further section of the review. As Marx regards this section of the review as giving a striking and generous picture of the dialectical method he employs in *Capital*,³ it becomes an important point of departure for us.

We can see from the review that one of Marx's methodological starting points is the distinction between appearance and reality or, put differently, the distinction between phenomenon and essence:

The one thing which is of moment to Marx is to find the law of the phenomena with whose investigation he is concerned; and not only is that law of moment to him, which governs those phenomena, in so far as they have a definite form within a given historical period. Of still greater moment to him is the law of their variation, of the development, i.e., of their transition from one form into another, from one series of connexions to a different one.⁴

What Marx hopes to have presented in *Capital* is, as the reviewer says, the law of the phenomena of capitalist production. Marx assumes, therefore, that things appear differently in everyday life from what they are in economic science. Evidently, Marx subscribes to the notion that there is a reality 'behind' the appearance of economic life which systematic analysis can discover.⁵

Marx raises a contentious epistemological point here. He draws on what is, in the first place, a Kantian distinction between things as they appear (phenomena) and things as they are in themselves (noumena). But it is evident he does not agree with Kant's view that we cannot know what things are in themselves, for *Capital*, he suggests, presents the reality which lies behind the appearance of everyday economic life. Here Marx takes Hegel's part and argues, in the second place, that what we know in scientific experience is things as they are in themselves. This is, of course, where Marx becomes contentious. In accepting Hegel's criticism of Kant he appears to be subscribing to an idealist point of view, for Hegel employs the idea that scientific experience is the reality behind appearance to argue that all reality is thought.⁶ This is not, of course, a position that Marx would wish to share, so a question he has to resolve in *Capital* is how it is possible to hold the view that there is a reality behind the appearance and yet retain the view that the objects of our experience enjoy an existence independently of our thought.⁷

Facts

Marx makes a beginning by stressing the importance that facts play in his analysis. They have to play an important epistemological role in *Capital* because Marx places so little trust in the ideas of men concerning their circumstances. As Marx's Russian reviewer says:

Marx treats the social movement as a process of natural history, governed by laws not only independent of human will, consciousness and intelligence, but, rather, on the contrary, determining that will, consciousness and intelligence.⁸

This is a point which refers back to an argument in Marx's Preface to the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* and the

manuscript written jointly with Engels, *The German Ideology*.⁹ In both these works Marx argues that man's ideas are the product of his social circumstances, rather than men's social circumstances being the product of their ideas. The term ideology describes those systems of ideas which men produce to deal with those incompletely understood circumstances. For Marx, therefore, the ideas that men have concerning their circumstances – and this includes the ideas of professional political economists – have themselves to be investigated if we are properly to understand an issue of social enquiry. It goes without saying that ideas which have arisen naturally in the course of the development of society cannot provide the sole basis for a systematic investigation. According to Marx, much of the thinking of the political economists of his day is necessarily ideological. Thus, the starting point of scientific enquiry into capitalist production has not to be 'the idea, but only the external appearance'. And, as Marx allows the reviewer to continue, 'such an enquiry will confine itself to the confrontation of a fact, not with ideas, but with another fact.'¹⁰

At the basis of Marx's critique of political economy is, therefore, an appeal to everyday empirical reality. Marx, quite simply, accuses the political economist of being unable to explain the facts of capitalist production. This appears to be a mundane enough point; but it becomes more complex if we view it in the light of Marx's claim that we cannot rely on the facts as they manifest themselves to the ordinary person. Marx does not think we should take the facts of the everyday world as they stand, rather, they have to be compared and confronted with one another. According to him, they have to be investigated as accurately as possible and then shown to form 'each with respect to the other, different moments of an evolution (*Entwicklungsmomente*)'.¹¹ We have to be careful to distinguish, therefore, what Marx means by 'facts' and what is ordinarily meant by the term. For Marx facts are not immediate, isolated experiences, as they are for the empiricist philosopher; all facts in a subject of human enquiry, such as economics, are internally connected and they can by careful analysis often be shown to form a coherent whole.

Marx's views on facts brings us to an important point in the methodology of the social sciences which has been well put by Theodor Adorno in his essay on 'Karl Mannheim's Sociology of Knowledge'. Mannheim, Adorno says:

Flirts with positivism to the extent that he believes himself able to rely on objectively given facts, which, however, in his rather lax manner he describes as 'unarticulated'. These unarticulated facts can then be put through the sociological thought-machine and thus elevated to general concepts. But such classification according to ordering concepts would be an adequate cognitive process only if the facts, which are assumed to be immediately given, could be abstracted from their concrete context as easily as it would appear to the naive at first glance. It is not adequate, however, if social reality has, prior to every theoretical ordering glance, a highly 'articulated' structure upon which the scientific subject and the data of his experience depend.¹²

If we set to one side the aspects of this argument which are solely connected with Mannheim's particular misuse of the notion of facts, what Adorno is saying is reasonably straightforward and directly relevant to what Marx has to say in *Capital*. What Adorno stresses is that a social scientist cannot assume the facts present themselves in totally innocent and unstructured ways. In other words, the social scientist's facts are not objectively given, nor, in Mannheim's phrase, 'unarticulated' direct experiences. The facts are what they are as an outcome of a complex social and historical development both in society and within the discipline itself. This means that the social theorist cannot assume that they are sufficiently substantial and 'out there' for him to be able to test hypotheses against them in an uncritical way. The social scientist is part and parcel of the social world he is trying to explain, and this social world is not amenable to arbitrary hypotheses or 'leaps' of the imagination because it is already structured in itself. As Adorno concludes, in a manner which makes clear his debt to Marx:

The thesis of the primacy of being over consciousness includes the methodological imperative to express the dynamic tendencies of reality in the formation and movement of concepts instead of forming and verifying concepts in accordance with the demand that they have pragmatic and expedient features.¹³

Like Hegel, Marx prefers the disjunctive form of the syllogism, because of its greater concreteness, to the reflective forms. Seen from the viewpoint of Marx's dialectical method it is not a question of matching ideas to the facts but of discovering the interconnexions which already exist among the facts, and those facts and our ideas. We have first to disentangle these ideas from the facts of social life properly to understand those facts.

Two concepts of appearance

Of the problems to which Marx's notion of facts gives rise by far the most difficult results from his being perfectly happy to describe a fact as an external appearance (*äussere Erscheinung*). This gives rise to confusion because, as we have seen, Marx also wants to claim that appearances are misleading. Marx, in other words, holds that things as they appear are different from what they are otherwise, or in reality. This would seem to leave him on very shaky ground if he is to rely on appearance or 'the facts' to refute classical political economy. For, on the one hand, Marx suggests that appearance is what is real and, on the other, he suggests it is not in the least bit real.

Now, in our view, this apparent confusion in Marx's thinking can only be explained on the assumption that he is employing two concepts of appearance. In the first place, he employs appearance to designate an everyday reality which is indubitably real. Here appearance refers to phenomena whose existence, unlike Hegelian phenomena, is without doubt. And the notion of appearance is often used in this sense. If we were asked to describe a person's appearance, for instance, there would be no implication that what we described was somehow unreal. We would have no hesitation in saying that what we describe, for instance, a person's long hair, thick beard and dark eyes, was real enough. In describing an appearance here we would be describing what is the case.

At many points in his argument, however, Marx also stresses that he subscribes to the accepted scientific distinction between appearance and reality. This can seem confusing. Marx has already said that appearance is what is the case; but this scientific distinction implies the opposite about the nature of appearance. The scientific distinction implies that appearance is just what is not wholly the case, whereas the scientific law reveals the true nature of reality. In this instance appearance is taken to be what is unreal, much in the sense we might say a person 'appeared' to have drowned when in fact he had swum off to safety. The gasping, the waving of arms, and the apparent panic were deceptive. These appearances belied what was actually taking place. And this is also a sense in which Marx employs the term appearance. He can, of course, only sustain this position by holding two

different concepts of appearance, the first of which stresses the reality of appearance (in an existential sense) and the second which stresses its deceptiveness or unreality (in an epistemological sense).

This is a difficult position to understand, particularly if we prefer concepts always to be used in a totally clear-cut way. But Marx does not see it as his task to simplify complicated relations. He uses the two distinct concepts of appearance because both are essential to his argument. Marx begins by stressing the reality of everyday experience. He has no desire wholly to dissolve the reality of empirical experience in the manner of the idealist philosopher. Hegel's argument about scientific understanding in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, namely, that science in its laws demonstrates the ideality of our experience, is not one which appeals to Marx.¹⁴ He argues, therefore, that the manner in which the objects of analysis in *Capital* appear to the ordinary person represents an undeniable, factual reality. But this does not prevent the uncompromising, factual reality from being misleading. Indeed, more often than not, the manner in which it appears to the ordinary man will lead him to misunderstand its true nature. There has to be a place, therefore, in Marx's system for scientific (*wissenschaftlich*) analysis which goes behind the appearance of capitalist production to the complex of laws which control the movements of the phenomenon. This reality is naturally different from and in a sense opposed to empirical reality because it is only accessible through scientific understanding. The scientific understanding regards appearance as appearance, in other words, as the manner in which the facts immediately present themselves; whereas for the ordinary understanding appearance goes largely unquestioned. The important point is however, that both these worlds are equally real. Empirical reality exists just as much as does scientific reality. The one can be observed by the senses and the other can be discovered by the intellect. Marx subscribes to two distinct concepts of appearance, therefore, because appearance possesses these two aspects.

In an important and well written article Norman Geras tackles this problem of 'Essence and appearance' in Marx's *Capital*, Geras stresses how Marx 'presents the conceptual distinction between appearance and reality as a form of *scientificity as such*'.¹⁵ He points out, in other words, that Marx thought the task of scientific

understanding was to uncover a reality behind appearance. He cites some convincing evidence to show that this is how Marx saw his task in *Capital* and he also detects that Marx uses appearance in an apparently conflicting sense to describe what he takes to be undeniably real. In discussing, in particular, Marx's account of commodity fetishism Geras says:

The distinctions, form/content, appearance/essence, retain their significance for the analysis and explanation of these realities, but on the condition that the first term of each opposition is not taken to be synonymous with illusion. Because the forms taken by capitalist social relations, their modes of appearance, are historically scientific ones, they are puzzling forms, they contain a secret. The reasons why social relations should take such forms, rather than others, are not self-evident. It requires a work of analysis to discover them, to disclose the secret, and, in doing this, it reveals the contents of these forms and the essence of these appearances. At the same time the content explains the form, and the essence the appearances. But this must not be regarded as a journey from illusion to reality. It is rather a process of elucidating one reality by disclosing its foundation in and determination by another.¹⁶

As Geras suggests, Marx employs the distinction between appearance and essence (or reality) in a subtle way. From the point of view of scientific understanding appearance has to be seen as confusing or deceptive, but this is not to say that it does not in fact exist. Geras puts Marx's point well when he says appearance is not necessarily an illusion. He is equally correct when he speaks in terms of two realities one of which (the reality of appearance) has 'its foundation in and determination by another' (the reality of the scientific explanation). Marx is firmly of the view that the world as it appears to us is not something we have merely imagined. As Geras indicates, Marx speaks in terms of the necessary appearance of capitalist social relations and not simply in terms of mistaken or confused understanding. And this is also the manner in which Marx regards the hopelessly confused reasoning of the political economists of his day. This is again a point that Geras brings out when he quotes Marx as saying:

The categories of bourgeois economy . . . are forms of thought expressing with social validity the conditions and relations of a definite, historically determined mode of production, viz., the production of commodities.¹⁷

Even the best political economists are, in a sense, excused for failing fully to come to grips properly with the relations which underlie capitalist production. They, like the ordinary person, are taken in by the necessary appearance of those relations.

It comes as a great surprise, therefore, when Geras after taking this view argues that Marx also analyses in *Capital* 'forms which are illusory in the full sense, appearances which are mere appearances'.¹⁸ One such form is, Geras suggests, the wage form. But if we follow Geras's initial argument it seems that Marx does not at any stage need to employ appearance to signify mere illusion. Indeed, it would seriously undermine Marx's argument in certain key sections of *Capital* if he did so, and, perhaps more importantly, lead him to a possibly idealist ontology. In my view Marx takes appearance always to have an existential or factual basis, and he would not have been led to infer as, for instance, Geras implies that 'the wage-form . . . unlike the value-form, corresponds to no objective reality'.¹⁹ Marx most certainly argues that the wage form obscures the manner in which the worker is paid less for the labour power he expends in producing a commodity than the value he in fact produces, but he adds that the manner in which this transaction appears as 'the price of labour' does not represent, as Geras suggests, a mere illusion. For as Geras himself quotes Marx as saying, 'the price of labour-power inevitably appears as the price of labour under the capitalist mode of production'.²⁰ Here, as before, the appearance is a necessary one and does not represent mere illusion.

The distinction between the mode of presentation and the mode of research

I should like now to turn to a point of similar importance in discussing Marx's method in *Capital*. In the Foreword to his translation of the *Grundrisse* (compiled by Marx in 1857-8), Martin Nicolaus employs a distinction which derives very clearly from the work of Marx. He argues:

In every science there is a difference between the method of working and method of presentation. It is the difference of form between the laboratory and the lecture hall. Very little about the physical world, say, would be widely understood if the only presentation of results

came in the form of a film or a diary displaying the scientist working. Conversely, relatively less would be understood about the scientific method of working if the only source of knowledge about it were papers presenting results.²¹

Nicolaus goes on to argue that the *Grundrisse* which is the first rough draft of *Capital* represents a striking illustration of Marx's method of working. The *Grundrisse* is, so to speak, Marx's laboratory where Marx grapples with 'fundamental problems of theory'.²² In the *Grundrisse* we can observe how Marx comes to his most important conclusions. What Marx has to say in the afterword to *Capital* would appear to bear out Nicolaus's claim. Of course, Marx says:

The method of presentation [Darstellungsweise] must differ in form from that of research or enquiry [Forschungsweise]. The latter has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyse its different forms of development, to trace out their inner connexion. Only after this work is done, can the actual movement be described. If this is done successfully, if the life of the subject-matter is ideally reflected as in a mirror, then it may appear as if we had before us a mere *a priori* construction.²³

Clearly, in presenting *Capital* the task of 'appropriating the material in detail' lies behind Marx. There seems no reason to doubt that some of this work took place, as Nicolaus suggests, in the seven notebooks we have come to know as the *Grundrisse*. What, in contrast, we have before us in *Capital* is the completed scientific work, which outlines the 'actual movement' of capitalist production by drawing out the inner connexions which Marx takes to exist among the various stages of development of the phenomenon. What comes to the fore in *Capital* is, therefore, Marx's *Darstellungsweise* or method of presentation.

This conclusion has, of course, an important bearing on Marx's use of dialectic in *Capital*. It is not lightly that Marx describes his method in the work as dialectical. He is most conscious of the idealist and, ultimately, conservative use to which Hegel put dialectics. Consequently Marx is always at pains to distinguish the outcome of a dialectical analysis he may undertake from the probable outcome of such an analysis with Hegel; and his remarks on the *Darstellungsweise* of *Capital* also bear the marks of this kind of consideration.

I take the view that Marx thinks of dialectic in *Capital* as the

mode of presentation of the inner connexion (*innres Band*) of the different forms of development of capitalist production. Marx, in other words, does not believe there is anything particularly dialectical about his mode of research. He is prepared to accept that he adopts the same empirical and analytical techniques of investigation as the British political economists whom he criticizes. In his preparatory work for *Capital* Marx dissects the work of his predecessors in political economy and compares their theories with the actual circumstances in British society. For his empirical material Marx draws heavily on Parliamentary Reports, newspapers and journals of the day and innumerable works on social, economic and political history. Marx's mode of research presupposes, above all, an open and critical mind, seeking out connexions and interrelationships. However, the mode of presentation of the results of the research does draw upon dialectics. In saying this, a remark that Marx immediately directs at Hegel is that, unfortunately, with Hegel dialectic is presented as also determining the method of research. Hegel sees dialectic not only as a method of presenting the 'inner connexion' among things, but also as that inner connexion itself.²⁴ Of course if dialectic were (in a Hegelian fashion) regarded as being itself the inner connexion of the different forms of development of capitalist production it would seem as though the mere idea of those inner connexions brought them into being. We would, in other words, see the different forms of capitalist production as connected merely by an idea rather than see them also as connected in fact. As Marx is aware, this is the kind of idealist thesis Hegel puts forward, most remarkably, in his *Philosophy of Nature*. In the *Naturphilosophie* Hegel argues that because science discovers the essence of nature the natural world is merely the externalization (*Entäusserung*) of the Idea.²⁵ This is a conclusion Marx seeks, at all costs, to avoid. He has no wish for his dialectic to detract at all from the reality of capitalist production.

But Marx does grant that if the movement of a phenomenon is described successfully in science, or:

If the life of the subject-matter is ideally reflected as in a mirror, then it may appear as if we had before us a mere *a priori* construction.²⁶

But this impression is, in his view, misleading. For it is not the

scientist's ideas which make the subject-matter as it is but it is, rather, that the ideas contained in the explanation merely reflect accurately the nature of the subject-matter. The results of a successful scientific enquiry demonstrate how the object of the enquiry is constituted but they do not, in a Hegelian fashion, constitute the object. This is an important distinction since it is because Hegel fails to make it that he is, as Marx says, able to transform the process of thought into 'an independent subject'.²⁷ and make the real world into a form of manifestation of the Idea. Hegel fails to see that 'the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought'.²⁸

It is important that we take Marx's point here and not see it as mere logical hair-splitting. Marx argues that his dialectical method presents the reality behind the appearance of the capitalist production process. But he wants to suggest this in a way which will not lead him into the pitfall of Hegelian idealism. For this reason he has to be perfectly clear on the point that his dialectic does not represent the only reality. Dialectics is merely a special kind of thought and all thought, in Marx's view, leaves the empirical world as it stands. Of course, thought can illuminate the underlying structure of the empirical world but this does not alter it in any immediate way. So the reality which scientific investigation uncovers must be seen as existing alongside the empirical world; it does not overcome nor negate it. Hegel, on the other hand, takes his dialectic to overcome and dissolve the empirical world so that the dialectical philosopher is enabled to raise himself in philosophy above the contradictions of everyday reality. But that Hegel mystifies the dialectical method by making it into the moving force of the real world does not detract from the fact that he was, in Marx's view, the 'first to present its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner.'²⁹ Dialectic in its mystical Hegelian form had been, Marx admits, fashionable with the German middle class because it seemed to be able to explain away the existing state of affairs. In making the idea the subject and social reality the object and, consequently, making social relations the appearance of the idea, Hegel was able to give the existing social relations the blessing of philosophy.³⁰

The rational form of dialectic

Marx, of course, does not want to use dialectic to mystify and to sanctify social relations in a manner similar to Hegel. One of Marx's earliest writings was a *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (1843). In this manuscript, which has only relatively recently been published in the English language, Marx takes Hegel to task for his philosophical idealization of contemporary political forms. In contrast Marx's object in using dialectic is to throw as much light as possible on the social relations of his day. If dialectic is used properly Marx cannot see how it can become popular with a ruling class because, in his view, it is an inherently critical method. He thinks dialectic is inherently critical:

Because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its necessary breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature, not less than its momentary existence, because it lets nothing impose on it . . .³¹

Clearly, therefore, Marx thinks that dialectic in its rational form is not a method which compromises with the existing state of affairs. Perhaps Marx has in mind here the classical dialectic of Heraclitus, Socrates and Plato. Hegel, however, attempts to use dialectic in his later work, especially the *Philosophy of Right*, to show that we have ultimately to 'recognize Reason as the rose in the cross of the present' and in this way become reconciled to the world as it is.³² Hegel regards his political philosophy as removing for the thinking person the unresolved conflicts of civil society. But Marx cannot accept this resignation. In his view, the insight dialectic provides into the reality of the present has revolutionary implications because the method not only brings out the 'good side' of the existing state of affairs but also its 'bad side'. It is, Marx argues, always the 'bad side' which produces the movement which makes history. The 'bad side' is the progressive side because it is what generates conflict and change. As Marx argues in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, no development or progress would take place if we sought, like Proudhon, always to eliminate the 'bad side' from history.³³

Marx's comments on Proudhon in *The Poverty of Philosophy*

pertain to the procedure of political economy as well as his own dialectical method. Marx criticizes political economists for regarding the capitalist economic system as the only natural and eternally valid mode of production. Economists, he says,

Have a singular method of procedure. There are only two kinds of institution for them, artificial and natural. The institutions of feudalism are artificial institutions and those of the bourgeoisie are natural institutions.³⁴

They are guilty of employing double standards in their approach. Economists are prepared, on the one hand, to see feudal (or pre-capitalist) economic forms in their historical context as ones which are inevitably to be superseded. Capitalist economic relations, on the other hand, are hallowed and presented as eternally valid. This Marx finds disingenuous. The approach which economists are prepared to adopt in relation to feudal society should also be adopted for capitalist society. Just as feudal society has its disintegrating side (the flight of serfs to the towns, the growth of merchandising and manufacturing in the towns), to which the economist is prepared to point as its progressive aspect, leading to the growth of capitalism, so capitalism has its own disintegrating tendencies leading to the possible development of socialism. If the economist is not prepared to overlook the 'bad side' of feudal society because he can see there the germs of a new economic system, equally he should not be prepared to overlook the 'bad side' of capitalism. For Marx, in the 'bad side' of capitalism: its exploitation, its poverty, its dissident working class and its cyclical crises, lie the germs of its own possible transcendence. Thus, in his view, it makes no sense to devise an economic theory which aims at eliminating within the capitalist form the deficiencies of that system. This would simply artificially prolong the system and weaken those very forces which threaten to transform the society. Marx argues that the only rational solution to the problems of capitalism is to allow the 'bad side' to work its way through. The successful transformation of a society must take place from within and not be introduced extraneously. 'What constitutes dialectical movement,' Marx says, 'is the coexistence of two contradictory sides, their conflict and their fusion into a new category. The very setting of the problem of eliminating the bad side cuts short the dialectical movement.'³⁵

Marx employs dialectic, therefore, to bring out the inner connexions of the different forms of capitalist development as transient, contradictory forms. He brings out the conflictual as well as the harmonious side of capitalist economic relations. Marx uses the term transient or transitory (*vergangliche*) to refer to social forms which are fully justified from the viewpoint of the system they articulate but which are, nevertheless, from the viewpoint of historical development limited forms. Such forms, which abound in the capitalist economy, are analysed by Marx, therefore, not only as relations which make the system, of which they are part, possible but also as relations which will lead to its possible breakdown. Marx's dialectical method is, clearly, double-edged. Marx regards the social institutions of capitalism as living forms which, just as they have the power of coming into being, also have the potential to pass away. Unlike the bourgeois economist Marx sees the economic forms of capitalism such as money, capital, wage-labour and competition as finite.³⁶ Like Hegel, Marx sees the truth not as being but becoming.

This allusion to finite, living forms is of central significance in the understanding of Marx's method. The purpose of the allusion is not difficult to see. In the first place, we must grant that we would find nothing out of the ordinary with a description of the life-cycle of a living organism which outlined the internal conditions present in that organism which initially brings it into being and then, similarly, outlined the internal conditions present in the mature organism which bring about its demise. This would be part and parcel of the description of the life-cycle of a living organism. We would be looking at it as a finite form; and this is how Marx suggests we should analyse capitalist production. In his view, it is a mode of production which has come into being in an unplanned or natural way. It was not, in other words, anyone's conscious intention that the capitalist economic form should come into being. For Marx, therefore, it is part of man's natural history and as such capitalism must suffer the fate common to all finite forms, decline and ultimate extinction.

It goes without saying that most modern economists, particularly those of the positivist school, would be unhappy with this approach. Economists of the positivist school see it as their task to describe and analyse what is taking place in the modern capitalist economy and not what they think *ought* to take place. They claim

that they are social scientists and not moralists. But things are not as simple as this. For what Marx argues is that it is not merely a moral imperative that capitalism be replaced. His position is more complex than that. What he argues is that the only way properly to comprehend the modern capitalist economy is to regard it as a finite or transient form which has the seeds of its own decline and overthrow within itself. In other words, Marx recommends that the economist regard the capitalist mode of production as a limited, deficient form of production simply if he is to understand it properly. The tendency amongst the political economists of Marx's day was to regard capitalist economic relations as the only possible form of economic relations, in other words, to see categories such as value, money and capital as immutable forms. In Marx's view this stems from the defect that:

Political economy starts with the fact of private property, but it does not explain it to us. It expresses in general, abstract formulas the material process through which private property actually passes, and these formulas it then takes for laws. It does not comprehend these laws, i.e. it does not demonstrate how they arise from the very nature of private property.³⁷

But these laws are, in Marx's view, the product of a particular epoch in the development of man. To be understood properly capitalist economic relations have to be seen as social forms which are in 'fluid movement' and, certainly, they are no more eternally valid than the fashions of the day.

Marx takes with him a sense of history to his analysis of the modern economy. He envisages that the capitalist mode of production may be superseded and replaced by a new and different mode of production, the communist mode of production. This contrast, he argues, allows him to see the relations of capitalist production in a new and clearer light from the other economists. We can see an example of Marx's use of this perspective in the chapter on commodities in *Capital*. After outlining what he thinks to be the grounds for the fetishism of commodities, Marx says:

Let us now picture to ourselves, by way of change, a community of free individuals, carrying on their work with the means of production in common, in which the labour-power of all the different individuals is consciously applied as the combined labour-power of the community. . . . The total product of our community is a social

product. One portion serves as fresh means of production and remains social. But another portion is consumed by the members as means of subsistence. Distribution of this portion amongst them is consequently necessary. . . . In this case the social relations of the individual producers, with regard both to their labour and to its product are perfectly simple and intelligible, and that with regard not only to production but also distribution.³⁸

According to Marx, therefore, the economic relations of capitalist society take on a mysterious form for the participants in those relations. As we have seen, Marx thinks that the ordinary person is taken in by the appearance of capitalist economic relations. The fetishism of commodities is an important example of this where the facts take on a necessary appearance which belies their true relationship. And what Marx claims here is that the complex and apparently mysterious economic relations of capitalist society are only divested of their complexity and mystery when they are viewed from the vantage point of a different mode of production. So, what the positive economist might regard simply as the normative or political aspect of Marx's method in *Capital* he himself regards as an aspect of its scientific nature. In his view, if we are to have an objective understanding of capitalist production we must see it from a standpoint both within and outside capitalist society. As Marx puts it in the third thesis on Feuerbach: 'The coincidence of the changing circumstances and of human activity or self-change can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionary practice'.³⁹ Marx's point is, on one plane, simple enough. All he is saying is that if the economist wishes to understand the capitalist economy properly he has not to be fully committed to that system. At another level what he is saying is much more difficult to accept, namely, that to understand capitalist society properly an individual has to be engaged in its revolutionary transformation.

Marx's conviction that to understand capitalist society properly requires that we are involved in its revolutionary transformation derives from his view of history and knowledge. Marx agrees with Hegel that each individual is 'a child of his time'⁴⁰ and is consequently in his usual or received thinking trapped in the consciousness of his era. But Marx notes that historical change comes about through the clash between oppressed and oppressing classes. In any such divided society the oppressing class

dominates the manner of thinking of the society, in other words, the ideology of the ruling class is the ruling ideology.⁴¹ Thus the only satisfactory way of getting outside the framework of the received ideas of a society (its 'conventional wisdom') is to challenge with the oppressed class the existing order. We cannot, according to Marx, escape the divisions of society by withdrawal from it to private life or academic study. In that we are social beings we unavoidably situate ourselves within the currents of our times. Thus to avoid simply accepting these currents Marx suggests that the correct cognitive and historically progressive stand to take is that of a revolutionary. The theorist has also to be involved in the practical efforts to transform society to become well and truly acquainted with its nature.

Concrete abstraction

In an article in *Economy and Society* Geoff Hodgson draws our attention to another important feature of Marx's method in *Capital*. Marx, he says:

Takes the 'form of value', and the 'commodity form' as the starting point because it is the most abstract and highly generalized form taken by the social product in the specific object of investigation – the capitalist mode of production.⁴²

It is apparent that Marx thought deeply about how best to begin *Capital*. In the omitted Introduction to the 1859 *Critique of Political Economy* he deals at length with the question of the appropriate starting point in political economy. Here he dismisses what appears to be the obvious starting point: the living whole, 'the population, the nation and state'.⁴³ He dismisses the living whole because it is too general an idea to make any great sense of the economic system. We must in the end, Marx argues, turn to more abstract concepts such as value, the division of labour, exchange and money to discover the complex relations underlying capitalist production.⁴⁴ Consequently, the obvious, concrete beginning with real individuals and states is not the best one. We are reminded here of Hegel's discussion at the beginning of his *Science of Logic*, 'With what must the science begin?', and his rejection of Fichte's ego or I as the correct starting point for

philosophy.⁴⁵ In being Hegel believed he had the correct concrete universal with which to begin his *Logic*.

Marx makes his point about the best way in which to begin the analysis of capitalism in terms of two contrasted concepts: the concrete and the abstract. He argues that what science requires is that 'abstract determinations lead towards a reproduction of the concrete by way of thought'.⁴⁶ Marx grants that it is tempting to make direct observation the starting point and then proceed, as do the economists of the seventeenth century, to discover 'through analysis a small number of determinant, abstract relations such as the division of labour, money, value etc.'⁴⁷ However, the most obvious manner of beginning is also one of the least rewarding because it is precisely those abstractions with which the early economists conclude their study which are the most penetrating and informative. What the successful study of any phenomenon requires is powerful abstraction which draws together the essential features of the phenomenon. In political economy such concepts as exchange value, the world market, competition and wage labour draw together features of the object under study far more successfully than aggregative and more intuitively apparent concepts such as population, the nation, production and consumption. Proceeding intuitively leads to a failure to discriminate between those categories which mark out a capitalist economy and those which are a feature of economies in general. To reconstruct the concrete world in thought requires an eye for the synthesizing category or what Hegel calls the 'concrete universal'.

There is a marked difference though between Marx's and Hegel's treatment of the 'concrete'. The 'concrete' with Marx always conveys a reality 'out there' – external to our minds and thought, which our thinking seeks to illuminate and comprehend. For Hegel, however, the concrete indeed conveys a reality external to our thought, but this is not a permanent 'otherness' or externality. Through the use of concrete universals such as we find in his *Science of Logic* we can, in Hegel's view, undermine the apparent independence of the world.⁴⁸ With Hegel science and logical thought both penetrate and dissolve the external world. Hegel sees the power of comprehension as a power which can overcome the world. Marx puts it in a nutshell when he says in the 1857 Introduction to the *Grundrisse*: 'In this way Hegel fell into

the illusion of conceiving the real as the product of thought concentrating itself, probing its own depths, and unfolding itself out of itself, by itself'.⁴⁹ In Marx's view, Hegel misunderstands his own method. Hegel sees thought as creating the concrete rather than merely reconstructing it in thought.

The concrete, with Marx, represents the phenomenon which is to be explained, and the abstract determinations represent the ideas which are to constitute the explanation. However, when the 'abstract determinations' provide an accurate explanation of the phenomena they are no longer entirely abstract. They are, according to Marx, scientific or concrete abstractions. This is the procedure Marx adopts in *Capital* and the role of the introductory concept is, therefore, to provide a conception of the whole of capitalist production which is nevertheless firmly grounded in the individual's empirical experience. And this is, of course, how Marx introduces the reader to his subject. He says:

The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails, presents itself as an 'immense accumulation of commodities', its unit being a single commodity.⁵⁰

Marx takes the commodity as his starting point because it represents the elementary form (*Elementarform*) of the wealth of capitalist societies.⁵¹ We are immediately given a conception of the whole, yet we still retain a foothold in the everyday world. Although an ordinary person does not usually think of commodities as embodying a whole economic system he is at least familiar with them as a means through which people satisfy their wants. The commodity is, therefore, the ideal concrete abstraction from which to begin the analysis of capitalist production.

Apart from the convenience of the commodity in introducing Marx's topic there is another important aspect to the procedure. Marx argues that the best way in which to begin an account of capitalist production is with an abstract concept. We might take this to mean that Marx intends from the outset to leave to one side empirical considerations. But we would be altogether mistaken if we thought this; because Marx intends his abstract concepts to have a precise bearing on the facts. Marx introduces his subject with a concept which is a unique combination of the empirical and the abstract. As he points out, the important feature of the commodity is that it is not only the observable, tangible way in

which wealth manifests itself in a capitalist society, but it is also the elementary form of the mode of production under investigation. So the distinction to which Marx draws our attention with the concept commodity is also a distinction which is a feature of the empirical world. Marx here sees a parallel between the abstraction taking place in his understanding of capitalism and the abstraction within capitalist society itself. In short, the abstraction reflects the already structured nature of reality. This type of abstraction enjoys many of the same features as the syllogism of necessity outlined by Hegel. Unlike other forms of the syllogism this kind of reasoning does not relate one arbitrary feature of the world to another but rather brings together two such features in a necessary relationship. Wealth and commodities are related to each other in an essential way in a capitalist society.

We can show more clearly what we mean by the phrase 'the already structured nature of reality' if we look at another example of Marx's method of abstraction in *Capital*. This example concerns his distinction between use-value and exchange-value. Marx introduces the distinction in this way:

Every useful thing like iron, paper etc., is to be regarded from two points of view, according to quality and quantity. Each such thing is a whole of many properties and can, therefore, be of use according to its various sides.⁵²

The qualitative side of a thing comes to the fore with use-value and the quantitative side with exchange-value. Here the standard Aveling-Moore translation of *Capital* is not quite adequate, for they translate the key first line as 'every useful thing like iron, paper etc., may be regarded from two points of view'. The translation of 'is' as 'may' – although on the face of it a trivial mistake – none the less loses the force of Marx's argument. The original phrasing illustrates clearly how Marx understands the process of theoretical abstraction, namely, as an objective process which brings out the existing distinctions in the object under investigation. In using 'may' Moore and Aveling give the impression that Marx makes the distinction only to help us understand a complex and detailed subject. But Marx does not think of abstraction merely as a teaching device. The pattern of reasoning they imply is taking place follows more closely the pattern of

what Hegel calls the syllogism of reflection rather than that of the more satisfactory syllogism of necessity. Marx is not engaged in extracting a variable from its empirical surroundings in order *then* to get down to analysing it. Rather Marx sees theoretical abstraction itself as a process of illuminating the complex and many-sided relations of an object in its empirical surroundings. With the conventional notion of theoretical abstraction, abstraction precedes analysis, with Marx the process of abstraction is also the process of analysis. As Marx puts it in the Preface to the first edition of *Capital*: 'In the analysis of economic forms . . . neither microscopes nor chemical reagents are of use. The force of abstraction must replace both. For bourgeois society, however, the commodity form of the product of labour or the value form of the commodity is the economic cell form'.⁵³

The distinction between use-value and exchange-value is, therefore, not only a distinction that aids our understanding of the origin of value – which is the usual manner in which abstraction is understood in economics – but is also an abstraction which appears to take place in the actual reproduction of capitalist society. The abstraction has on it all the hallmarks of the concrete form of argument which attracted Hegel to the disjunctive syllogism. Marx is not concerned to develop models or 'ideal types' of the capitalist economy in the manner suggested by Weber.⁵⁴ A distinction is, Marx thinks, made *in practice* in capitalist societies between use-value and exchange-value. Quite simply, capitalist production is so organized that an object's value in use is totally distinct from its commercial value. The distinction is one with which every individual is familiar. Nobody expects that the market will place the same value on objects as the possessor himself places on them. So Marx reasons that what is made equivalent in exchange certainly cannot be the use-values of objects. In exchange, in other words, a commodity possesses a value which abstracts from its actual value to the owner. So, on the one hand, a commodity is desired for its use-value but, on the other hand, the commodity's socially recognized value is something different. For what is being equated in exchange is not use-value, but the human labour embodied in the commodities. Naturally, this is not the specific human labour embodied in each, but what Marx calls the 'abstract human labour'. Marx argues that in the analysis of the value relation:

Along with the useful qualities of the products themselves, we put out of sight both the useful character of the various kinds of labour embodied in them, and the concrete forms of that labour; there is nothing left but what is common to them all; all are reduced to one and the same sort of labour, human labour in the abstract.⁵⁵

From this we can see that Marx sees his analytical ordering of the relations of the capitalist mode of production as at one and the same time being the way in which economic relations in capitalist society are themselves ordered. This is what is meant by concrete abstraction. In Hegelian terms, Marx sees his method in *Capital* not as a form of 'positing' relations but as a form of 'determining' them. Now we can see why it is that Marx regards his procedure of leaving out of 'consideration the use-values of commodities' whereby they have one common property left, 'that of being products of labour' as simply being commensurate with what occurs in practice for, as Marx himself says, 'in the exchange relationship of commodities itself, exchange-value appears as something totally independent of use-value',⁵⁶ so there is only one thing left that is common to all commodities. Marx reduces all commodities to the common denominator of abstract human labour in exchange because he argues that this is, in fact, what takes place. The abstraction is, he suggests, an abstraction of the capitalist system itself.

Marx employs the dialectical method in *Capital* not to show in the Hegelian fashion that all our experience is ultimately conceptual, but to bring out categories and concepts which clarify and explain our experience. The categories of orthodox economics are revolutionized by Marx to demonstrate the underlying structure of contemporary civilization. Marx does not see the capitalist world as exemplifying or realizing certain categories or ideas. This world is not governed by ideas. It requires a dialectical synthesis to show how the anonymous force of the market operates. The dialectical ordering of ideas reflects a world which, far from embodying rational thought, has yet to be properly mastered and controlled by it.

Notes

1. Marx, K., *Capital*, Vol. I, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1970, p. 17; *Das Kapital*, Band I, *Werke* 23, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1962, p. 25.

2. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 17; *Das Kapital*, p. 25.
3. 'I cannot answer the writer better than by aid of a few extracts from his own criticism which may interest some of my readers to whom the Russian original is inaccessible.' *Capital*, I, p. 17; *Das Kapital*, p. 25.
4. *Capital*, I, p. 18; *Das Kapital*, p. 25.
5. As G. Cohen puts it, 'Marx frequently pronounced his teaching on essence and appearance when he was at work on *Capital*, which he conceived as an attempt to lay bare the reality underlying and controlling the appearance of capitalist relations of production'. Karl Marx's *Theory of History: A Defence*, Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 326. See also D. S. Sayer, *Marx's Method*, Harvester, Sussex, 1979, pp. 8-9.
6. This is a view which Hegel derives originally from Schelling. Schelling claims that what the successful natural scientist achieves in his writing is the idealization of nature. The scientist achieves this by reducing complex natural phenomenon to a law. (F. W. J. Schelling, *System des Transcendentalen Idealismus, Werke*, Vol. 2, Munich, 1965, p. 339). This is what lies behind Hegel's intriguing suggestion in the third chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* that there would be nothing for us to see 'behind the curtain of appearance' unless we ourselves had not stepped behind. (*Phenomenology of Spirit*, tr. A. V. Miller, Oxford, 1979, p. 103, *Werke* 3, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt, 1970, p. 135). The outcome of scientific investigation for Hegel is as subjective as it is objective, in the scientific law, mind and nature meet.
7. I take it for granted that Marx is a materialist. This materialism appears to me to have two important dimensions. Firstly, Marx is an existential materialist, namely, he holds that the objects of our perception have an existence separate and distinct from that perception. Secondly, Marx is an epistemological realist in that he holds that the objects and events of our knowledge subsist or take place independently of knowing them. Both aspects of Marx's materialism are, of course, interrelated but it is valuable, I have found, to distinguish the two.
8. *Capital*, I, p. 18, *Das Kapital*, 26.
9. 'The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life'. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness'. *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1971, pp. 20-1. 'Morality, religion, metaphysics, and all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness no longer seem to be independent. They have no history or development. Rather, men who develop their material production and their material relationships alter their thinking along with their real existence. Consciousness does not determine life, but life determines consciousness'. *The German Ideology*, in L.D. Easton and K.M. Guddat

(editors and translators), *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, Anchor Books, New York, 1967, p. 415.

10. *Capital* I, p. 18; *Das Kapital*, p. 26. This is my translation. The translation of S. Moore and E. Aveling (and edited by Engels) reads 'the idea, but the material phenomenon alone'. This is but the first of a number of discrepancies which arise between a more literal and technical translation of Marx's text and the freer and less technical translation authorized by Engels. Clearly, Engels authorized a translation which fitted in with his own appreciation of Marx's enterprise. More recently considerable doubt has been thrown on the authenticity of Engels's understanding and interpretation of Marx. Terrell Carver has suggested that there is a considerable divergence between Marx's understanding of his enterprise and Engels's later interpretation of it. In Carver's view the divergence is most marked in their understanding of materialism and science and the scope of Marx's undertaking. Engels in his later work tended, in Carver's view, to see Marx's writing as constituting a closed system in a semi-Hegelian fashion – one thing that Marx wanted, above all, to avoid. (T. Carver, *Marx & Engels: the Intellectual Relationship*, Harvester, Brighton, 1983, especially pp. 152–9). Even more pertinent to this enquiry is Norman Levine's attempt to show in *Dialogue within the Dialectic* that Engels (systematically) misconstrued Marx's meaning in *Capital* through his editorial control over the second and third volumes. Levine comes to the following conclusion after comparing the relevant manuscripts and texts:

'Advertently, Engels desired to transmit the rational purpose of Marx. Inadvertently, Engels did introduce modifications of different orders and quality into the text. . . . In the case of Engels we are dealing with inadvertent consequences resulting from poor understanding. Engels inadvertently introduced other "shifts of emphasis" or "shifts of meaning" into Volume 2 of *Capital*.' *Dialogue within the Dialectic*, Allen & Unwin, London 1984, p. 185. I think there is strong evidence to show that the same inadvertence is evident in Engels's editorial work on the translation of *Capital* undertaken by Moore and Aveling. I think it was probably unavoidable that Engels should see Marx's purpose differently from Marx himself. But Engels in his philosophical writings tends toward the mechanical materialism of the eighteenth century. Marx's materialism (probably under the influence of Feuerbach) was always a humanly oriented materialism.

11. *Capital* I, p. 18; *Das Kapital*, p. 26.
12. *Prisms*, Neville Spearman, London, 1967, pp. 42–3.
13. Adorno, *Prisms*, p. 43.
14. Marx says of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in his essay 'Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic and Philosophy as a whole': 'Despite its thoroughly negative and critical appearance and despite the genuine criticism contained in it, which often anticipates far later development, there is already latent in the *Phenomenology* as a germ, a

- potentiality, a secret, the uncritical position and the equally uncritical idealism of Hegel's later works – that philosophic dissolution and restoration of the existing empirical world'. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1970, pp. 175–6.
15. 'Fetishism in Marx's Capital', *New Left Review*, 65, 1971, p. 71.
 16. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
 17. *Ibid.*, p. 76. The quotation is taken from *Capital I*, p. 76; *Das Kapital I*, p. 90.
 18. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
 19. *Ibid.*, p. 81. Geras's mistaken attempt to distinguish the value form and commodity form in this respect probably arises from his desire not to regard 'the appearance that the worker disposes of his labour power according to his own free will' ('Fetishism in Marx's Capital', p. 81) as having any basis in reality. But in this he is wrong. In contrast with the feudal serf the modern wage worker does enjoy real freedom – at least to choose his employer. Geras loses a vital element in Marx's analysis in not following through how this freedom turns (dialectically) into its opposite. The assertion that 'the wage form corresponds to no objective reality' is one that would delight the idealist, Hegel, but would strike Marx, who has his feet firmly on the ground – as bizarre.
 20. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
 21. Marx, *Grundrisse*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973, p. 25. Cf. D. Sayer, *Marx's Method*, p. ix: 'Marx was careful to distinguish between his method of enquiry . . . and his method of presentation, which can come into play 'only after the work is done'.
 22. *Grundrisse*, p. 25.
 23. *Capital I*, p. 19; *Das Kapital*, p. 27.
 24. Hegel says of his dialectical method in the *Science of Logic* that it is 'to be recognized as the unrestrictedly universal, external and internal mode and as the absolutely infinite power to which no object, in so far as it presents itself as an external foreign to reason, independent of it could offer resistance . . . and could not be penetrated by it. It is therefore the soul and the substance, and anything at all is only grasped and known in its truth when it is absolutely subordinated to the method.' *Werke*, 6, pp. 551–2; *Science of Logic*, p. 826. Hegel sees his dialectical method as destroying the independence and externality of an object. Dialectic is for Hegel itself idealist. It is precisely this Marx wants to get away from.
 25. Hegel, *Encyclopaedia II, The Philosophy of Nature*, para 247, comment; *Werke* 9, p. 25. Hegel speaks here of nature as 'spirit alienated from self' and that the thinking way of regarding nature is as 'this process of becoming spirit'. Marx comments on this in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*: 'Externality here is not to be understood as the self-externalizing world of sense open to the light, open to the man endowed with senses. It is to be taken here as a defect, which ought not to be. For what is true is still the idea'. p. 192.

26. *Capital* I, p. 19; *Das Kapital* p. 27. A more literal translation is: 'If this succeeds and the life of the material now ideally reflects itself back to us, then it may appear as though we have to do with a construction *a priori*'.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. Marx derives the view that Hegel inverts the relationship of idea and reality or subject and predicate from Feuerbach's philosophy. See *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, where Marx says 'Feuerbach is the only one who has a serious critical attitude to the Hegelian dialectic and who has made genuine discoveries in this field'. p. 172. Marx was particularly impressed by Feuerbach's *Preliminary Theses towards the Reform of Philosophy* (1842) where Feuerbach develops the view that Hegel's idealism falsely subordinates being to the idea or thought. L. Feuerbach, *Anthropologische Materialismus: Ausgewählte Schriften* I, Frankfurt, 1967, p. 94.
31. *Capital* I, p. 20; *Das Kapital*, p. 28.
32. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, Oxford, 1969, p. 12, *Werke* 7, p. 26. In Hegel's view dialectical reason always comes to the scene too late to change things or to give 'instruction as to what the world ought to be'. It is only when a society is properly formed that the truth about it is known, so that it has already been put into practice when we discover it. *Philosophy of Right*, p. 13; *Werke* 7, p. 28. For Marx this conclusion underestimates the qualities of what he calls practical-critical activity.
33. *The Poverty of Philosophy*, International Publishers, New York, 1971, p. 121.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
35. *Ibid.* pp. 112-13.
36. Cf. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 129; *Werke* 5, p. 139 'Something with its immanent limit, posited as the contradiction of itself, through which it is directed and forced out of and beyond itself, is the *finite*'.
37. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, p. 106.
38. *Capital* I, pp. 78-9; *Das Kapital*, p. 92.
39. *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, p. 40.
40. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 11; *Werke* 7, p. 26.
41. *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*: 'In every epoch the ideas of the ruling class are the ruling ideas, that is, the class that is the ruling material power of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual power'. p. 438.
42. G. Hodgson, 'Marxian Epistemology and the Transformation Problem', *Economy and Society*, Vol. 3, 4, p. 374.
43. *Grundrisse*, p. 100.
44. *Ibid.* p. 101.
45. *Science of Logic*, pp. 67-79; *Werke* 5, pp. 65-79. Hegel decides on pure being as his point of departure because 'the beginning must be an absolute, or what is synonymous here, an abstract beginning; and so

it may not presuppose anything, must not be mediated by anything nor have a ground; rather it is to be itself the ground of the entire science. Consequently, it must be purely and simply an immediacy, or rather merely immediacy itself. (*Science of Logic*, p. 70; *Werke* 5, pp. 68–9) Marx would no doubt approve of the attempt to combine the abstract with the immediate in the beginning, but not the desire to see this as absolute.

46. *Grundrisse*, p. 101.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

48. *Science of Logic*, p. 603; *Werke* 6, p. 277; 'As negativity in general or in accordance with the first, immediate negation, the universal contains determinateness generally as particularity; as the second negation, that is, as negation of the negation, it is absolute determinateness or individuality and concreteness. The universal is thus the totality of the notion [*Begriff*]; it is a concrete, and far from being empty, it has through its notion [*Begriff*] a content'. For a discussion of the 'concrete universal' in Hegel's philosophy see J. N. Findlay, *Hegel: A Re-examination*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1958, pp. 225–7 and M. J. Inwood, *Hegel*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1983, pp. 366–80. Inwood's discussion, in my view, too readily glosses over Hegel's idealism.

49. *Grundrisse*, p. 101.

50. *Capital* I, p. 35; *Das Kapital*, p. 49.

51. 'Elementary form' represents a more literal and accurate translation of the original than 'its unit being'. That it represents a more accurate translation can also be gleaned from what Marx says in his *Theories of Surplus Value* III, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1972, p. 112; *Marx-Engels Werke* 26, III, p. 11: 'We start with the commodity, this specific social form of the product as the foundation and prerequisite of capitalist production . . . the starting-point of the formation of capital and of capitalist production is the development of the product into a commodity, commodity circulation and consequently money circulation within certain limits, and consequently trade develops to a certain degree. It is as such a prerequisite that we treat the commodity, since we proceed from it as the simplest element in capitalist production'. See also T. Carver (translator and editor), *Texts on Method*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1975, p. 134 and pp. 133–8.

52. *Capital* I, p. 35; *Das Kapital*, p. 49.

53. *Capital* I, p. 8; *Das Kapital*, p. 12.

54. Max Weber assumes that social reality is so infinitely complex that it is impossible for a general theory to allow for and explain all particulars. None the less 'theoretical analysis in the field of sociology is possible only in terms of such pure types'. (*The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, New York Free Press, 1964, p. 110).

Not surprisingly Weber concludes that such a pure or ideal type cannot be taken to represent accurately any particular aspect of social reality. In the empiricist fashion Weber takes theoretical abstraction from an object as departing from its reality. Marx

believes the contrary, namely, that it is only through theoretical abstraction we can genuinely acquaint ourselves with something. On this aspect of Weber's method see W.G. Runciman, *A Critique of Max Weber; Philosophy of Social Science*, Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 36, and J. Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber*, (tr. Mary Ilford) Harmondsworth, 1968, p. 110.

55. *Capital I*, p. 38; *Das Kapital*, p. 52.

56. *Ibid.*

7

Marx's Dialectical Mode of Presentation: the Circulation of Commodities

The value form

There is ample evidence to suggest that Marx thought his analysis of the value-form at the beginning of *Capital*, Vol. I, crucial to the understanding of the modern capitalist economy.¹ Marx recognized that this section of the book represented the most difficult part of the whole analysis but was, none the less, indispensable.² He excuses its difficulty not only on the grounds that the beginning in any "science" is 'difficult' but also on the grounds that the analysis he offers is extremely new. Indeed, Marx sees himself here as providing an answer to a problem which 'the human mind has for more than 2,000 years sought in vain to get to the bottom of'.³

Marx does, in my view, make an important contribution to the theory of money, although his name is very little remembered on this account in orthodox economics textbooks. His contribution is not only to stress the various capacities in which money is used: as a means of payment; as a store of wealth; as a measure of value; as a means of exchange; and as a form of capital; but also in accounting for the many other extraordinary capacities money appears to possess. As well as possessing its various mundane qualities money also appears as an object of great mystery and power. The existence of money gives rise to the most powerful emotions and desires. This is a topic to which Marx devotes his attention in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*. He quotes Shakespeare's famous lines from *Timon of Athens*:

Gold? Yellow glittering, precious gold? No, Gods.
I am no idle votarist!

Thus much of this will make black white; foul fair;
 Wrong right; base noble; old young; coward valiant,
 . . . Why, this
 Will lug your priests and servants from your sides;
 Pluck stout men's pillows from below their heads:
 This yellow slave
 Will knit and break religions; bless the accursed;
 Make the hoar leprosy ador'd.⁴

Money transforms the world of its possessor. Money makes the individual who was once poor, rich. So 'what I am and am capable of is by no means determined by my individuality'.⁵ Money can make the most ugly person beautiful, the evil person good and the insignificant into the significant. Money transforms my desires and wants into goals and objectives that can be achieved. Nothing appears beyond its power. As Shakespeare points out, it has two prominent but antithetical properties. Money appears to be both the visible divinity which can subordinate everything to its whim and 'the common whore' or 'common pimp of people and nations'⁶ which brings together the most unlikely partners. The source of its alternately splendid and demeaning powers is an object of great interest to Marx. Here we see him at the height of his dialectical powers.

At the very beginning of the *Grundrisse* (the earliest draft of *Capital*) Marx takes the Proudhonist Darimon to task for his misleading diatribe against metallic currency in *De la Réforme des banques* (Paris, 1856).⁷ Darimon attributed the crisis in the French economy of his day to the outflows of bullion from the French Exchequer. His answer to these difficulties was to suggest that the metallic basis of the currency be abolished and consequently gold and silver lose their privileged position as commodities.⁸ In Marx's view Darimon confuses the symptoms of an underlying economic ill with its cause. Gold and silver were exported at times of financial crisis not because of any inherent property in the two metals, but because of the depreciation of the paper money into which silver and gold were nominally convertible. Quite simply, foreign creditors were demanding to be paid in bullion rather than in the depreciating paper currency. The value of a paper currency quite naturally decreases *vis à vis* gold and silver (providing there is no glut of the metals) when the nation which issues a paper currency is economically hard pressed.

The beginnings of Marx's dialectical consideration of the money form lie in this discussion in the *Grundrisse*. Darimon and the Proudhonists in general were, Marx suggests, bewildered by the money form and clearly failed to get to the bottom of it. They present one solution and then another in an attempt to resolve the difficulties of exchange and the money form. Their proposal to replace money as a means of payment with a system of labour time-chits would evidently do no more than reproduce the problems inherent in the money system in a different form. The reason that Darimon fails to decipher the money form is that the premisses of the questions he poses are entirely wrong. Marx takes the view that with apparently intractable intellectual problems of this kind 'frequently the only possible answer is a critique of the question and the only solution is to negate the question'.⁹ What Darimon fails to see is that the system of exchange which the currency in both its metallic and paper forms makes possible rests on a specific mode of production – production for a market – and that reforms in the system of exchange can do nothing to remove difficulties which arise from the mode of production itself. The export of gold and silver were not the cause of crises in the French economy, they were merely the most obvious manner in which the crisis expressed itself.

In *Capital* Marx seeks to pose the question of money in what he takes to be its true form. The correct point at which to begin is, he thinks, the value form or exchange value. The value form and the money form are for Marx opposite sides of the same coin. The appearance of the value form presupposes that 'exchange-value obtains a separate existence, in isolation from the product. The exchange-value which is separated from commodities and exists alongside them as itself a commodity, this is *money*'.¹⁰ In *Capital* Marx claims that this is a fact of which every individual is aware, if only through the realization that the value an object has in use to its consumer is different from and often cannot be expressed in terms of its exchange-value. For example, the market values of a favourite old sweater or tie bear no relation to their value to the owner; none the less, once offered as commodities even treasured personal items such as these can be expressed in a common currency. Money is, therefore, first and foremost the universal or general measure of the relative market values of commodities. As

such, money has an inherently equalizing tendency: high and low, extravagant and mean, the luxurious and the simply adequate. All may be brought before this court of judgement and demeaned or enhanced by it. As Marx puts it in *Capital*, 'everything becomes saleable and buyable,' not 'even are the bones of saints able to withstand this alchemy'.¹¹ Money, as he puts it more strongly in the *Grundrisse* is 'the god among commodities' representing their 'divine existence while they represent its earthly form'.¹²

In Marx's view the secret of the value form lies in the apparently simple equation:

x commodity A = y commodity B,
or x commodity A is worth y commodity B,

which can be expressed more concretely as:

20 yards of linen = 1 coat,
or 20 yards of linen are worth one coat.

But this equation has to be carefully and dialectically analysed. The first stage in this analysis is to determine precisely the function of the commodities figuring in the two equations. In the second equation the linen expresses its worth in terms of the coat. It appears that at the time of exchange twenty yards of linen are worth one coat. Here the coat serves as the tangible expression of the value of the linen. In this equation, therefore, the twenty yards of linen (or commodity A in the first equation) plays an *active* role, and the coat (or commodity B) plays a *passive* role.¹³ The coat basks in the reflected glory of the linen just as in the initial equation commodity B reflects the worth of commodity A. The value of the linen and commodity A are what has to be measured and the coat and commodity B represent the measures. Marx expresses this in this way: the linen and commodity A represent the *relative* pole of the equation and the coat and commodity B represent the *equivalent* pole of the equation.

This discussion of the passive and the active, of relative and the equivalent poles, and measure brings us deep into Hegelian dialectical waters. These are terms which figure prominently in Hegel's *Science of Logic* and *The Phenomenology of Spirit*.¹⁴ Although it is the similarities between Marx's approach and Hegel's which are more apparent at this stage, Marx's object in *Capital* is to use

these Hegelian terms to develop a different type of analysis. Marx's method of presentation is Hegelian, although the content of the analysis is entirely his own. He draws on Hegel's notion of the unity of opposites to explain more fully the relationship of the equivalent and relative poles. In the exchange of commodities, he says, 'the relative form and the equivalent form are two intimately connected, mutually dependent, and inseparable elements of the expression of value but, at the same time, are mutually exclusive, antagonistic extremes – i.e., poles of the same expression'.¹⁵

Marx suggests that the opposed commodities in the equation are the same in that all might serve either as equivalent or relative forms of value. In other words the equation might just as easily read:

y commodity B = x commodity A, or
1 coat = 20 yards of linen.

Here the roles of the commodities are (wholly) reversed. Those commodities which previously played the *passive* role (the coat and commodity B) now play an active role and, vice versa, those commodities which played the *active* role, now play a *passive* role. However, although all the commodities are in this respect the same, none the less, the partners in each equation remain opposed to one another. Once one partner is established as playing the active role the other partner must necessarily play the passive role. Just as in bridge where at the outset any player may be 'dummy', but once that role is allotted, that player's partner inevitably plays the active part. Once cast in the passive part as the commodity whose worth is to be measured the equivalent cannot play an active part as the commodity whose worth requires measuring. It is not possible for the coat or commodity B in the original equation to express their value in terms of themselves. One coat = one coat, or commodity B = commodity B are not expressions of value. They are mere tautologies. Their values can, of course, be expressed in terms of other commodities, but once the value of the coat is expressed in terms, say, of bars of soap (and commodity B in terms of say commodity C) they have ceased themselves to be equivalents and now perform the role of relative poles.¹⁶

The interchangeability of the roles of the various commodities

in Marx's equation expressing the simple or accidental value form bears a striking similarity to Hegel's discussion of the roles of the various terms in the first form of the syllogism, the *sylogism of existence*.¹⁷ Hegel designates the three terms of the syllogism, the individual, the particular and the universal, and shows that it is in relation to each other that the three judgements that make up the syllogism perform these roles. A judgement that performs the role of the particular in one syllogism may equally perform the role of individual or universal in another syllogism. There is nothing intrinsic in a judgement itself that casts it in one of the three roles; each depends on its relation to the other two judgements. However, once a judgement takes one role in a syllogism it can no longer perform either of the other two roles.

Marx's argument about the two poles of the simple value equation is the same. As he points out 'the commodity that figures as the equivalent cannot at the same time assume the relative form'.¹⁸ This distinction helps Marx to mark out the role played by money in commodity exchange, since money is originally no more than one commodity that has through practice and custom been established as the equivalent pole in a large variety and number of exchanges.

'Money,' Marx puts it in the *Grundrisse*, 'does not arise by convention . . . it arises out of exchange, and arises naturally out of exchange'.¹⁹ At first those commodities act as money which are most commonly exchanged, such as 'salt, cattle, hides and slaves'. However, with the development of exchange more attention is given to the serviceability of the commodity for exchange. The need for durability, and for smallness of size and weight in relation to the value embodied in the commodity all make themselves felt and the role gradually falls to the precious metals such as silver and gold. Paradoxically, just as in the earlier stages it is the most commonly exchanged commodities which are used, at the more advanced stages it is the least commonly used commodities which become the medium of exchange. These commodities come to function almost exclusively as money.

In Marx's view the basis of the equivalence among commodities, and expressed by money, is human labour time. But what is being equated in a commodity transaction is not the actual hours of human labour expended on the production of a commodity but those hours expressed in terms of the average amount of labour

time required to produce that commodity at an established level of technology.²⁰ What the exchange relation does is to equate the abstract human labour time embodied in the relative pole with the abstract human labour time concretely realized in the equivalent. In Marx's example;

The value of the commodity linen is expressed by the bodily form of the commodity coat, the value of the one by the use value of the other. As a use-value, the linen is something palpably different from the coat; as value it is the same as the coat, and now has the appearance of a coat. The linen acquires a value form different from its physical form.²¹

In his account of Plato's philosophy in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* Hegel speaks of Plato's criticism of the techniques of argument of the *Sophist* in the dialogue of the same name. Hegel commends Plato's view that more difficult and more rewarding than the sophist's approach of showing something always to be other than it appears is to show that 'what is the other is the same and what is the same is another, and indeed in one and the same respect'.²² In Hegel's view this is a higher form of dialectic than that practised by the sophists and provides the basis for genuine knowledge. Marx's dialectic of the value form draws on the same points. He stresses, as Hegel believes Plato suggests, the differences of the two sides of the value relation but also brings out the sense in which they are the same.

Both sides of the value equation are alike in that they are commodities embodying abstract human labour, but they are unlike each other in that the use value of one expresses the exchange value of the other. Through this Marx hopes to demonstrate that it is not the peculiar property of gold, silver, banknotes or coin that gives rise to the apparently dazzling and mystifying character of money but the value relation itself. In the simple value equation the coat can represent the value of twenty yards of linen because for the linen the coat is the universal representative of value. Marx uses this example to illustrate his point: 'A for instance, cannot be "your majesty" to B, unless at the same time majesty in B's eyes assumes the bodily form of A, and what is more, with every new father of the people changes its features, hat and many other things besides'.²³ The peculiarity of the equivalent pole which endows it with mystery and apparent 'majesty' is that its use-value 'becomes the form of manifestation,

the phenomenal form of its opposite, exchange-value'.²⁴ Another way of putting this is to say that the particular physical attributes of the commodity which represents the equivalent express the general social attributes of the commodity of the relative pole. As most of the physical attributes of the equivalent pole are a product of nature it appears as though the value is embodied in certain natural qualities, e.g., the whiteness of wool (in the coat) or the brilliance of the gold or silver. As Marx says:

The very essence of this form is that the material commodity itself – the coat – just as it is, expresses value, and it is endowed with the form of value by nature itself. Of course this holds good only so long as the value relation exists in which the coat stands in the position of equivalent to the linen.²⁵

Marx's analysis of the equivalent and relative form of value parallels Hegel's account of the solicitation of force in the *Science of Logic*. At first sight it appears that the equivalent pole (the linen) – the pole that eventually becomes money – is the *solicited* force and the relative pole (the coat) is the *soliciting* force. The role of the equivalent appears to be simply to act as a reflection of the relative worth of the active pole. It is the poor relation whose function is merely to mirror the value of the first commodity. But everything is not as it seems. Here, as Hegel puts it, 'one force is determined as soliciting and the other as being solicited; these determinations of form appear in this way as immediate differences already present in both forces. But they are essentially mediated'.²⁶ Once it is established that the essence of the equivalent's role is to be the embodiment of another commodity's worth it is clear that it requires an opposed relative pole as much as the relative pole requires an equivalent in which to express its worth. Here we can allow Hegel to take up the story once again.

Accordingly, the fact that it (the equivalent) is solicited is its own act, or it itself decides that the other force is indeed an other and solicits it.²⁷

In other words the relative pole (the linen) can be seen as:

Solicited only in so far as it itself solicits the other to solicit it . . . each of the two receives the impulse from the other; but the impulse which it gives as active force consists in its receiving an impulse from the other; the impulse which it receives was solicited by itself'.²⁸

A further example may explain Marx's and Hegel's point. Earlier

legislation in English law has concentrated on curbing the activity of prostitution by making it illegal to solicit on the streets. These laws concentrated on prostitutes as the soliciting force, and some opponents of these laws claimed this implied the innocence of the solicited force, the (generally) male customer. More recent proposals have reversed this position by concentrating on the 'kerb-crawler', i.e., a car driver who drives around slowly in a car in search of a prostitute.²⁹ Removed from the streets by the previous laws the customers have now resorted to their cars to solicit the services of prostitutes. This apparent reversal in roles illustrates Hegel's view of the reciprocity of the soliciting relationship. Both the kerb-crawler and the prostitute solicit only in so far as they are 'solicited to solicit'. Responsibility cannot be exclusively apportioned to one side or the other. Both poles are an essential part of the relationship. Marx speaks of these categories as reflex relationships (*Reflexionsbestimmungen*).³⁰

Given the equal status of the relative pole (the linen) and the equivalent pole (the coat) the mysterious and powerful aura that surrounds the most developed form of the equivalent pole in exchange – money – seems difficult to explain. But money owes its power not to its actual equivalence in exchange to this or that amount of a given commodity but to its potential equivalence to this or that amount of *any* commodity:

With the possibility of holding and storing up exchange-value in the shape of a particular commodity arises also the greed for gold. Along with the extension of circulation, increases the power of money, that absolutely social form of wealth ever ready for use. But money itself is a commodity, an external object, capable of becoming the private power of private persons. Thus social power becomes the private power of private persons.³¹

The power of money derives from its acceptance as a universal equivalent, society gives to money its power, but that power is not exercised by the society. It is exercised by private individuals. Marx argues that this is why 'the ancients denounced money as subversive of the economic and moral order of things'.³² Society indeed solicits the power of money but finds itself dazzled and corrupted by it. What is solicited turns out itself to solicit (most forcibly).

Marx believes this dialectical analysis discloses the mysterious power of money but, crucially, does not make it any the more

resistible to those who suffer from its power. Here is a key difference between Hegel and Marx's dialectic. Hegel believes that the employment of dialectic in philosophy can make us more at home in the world. The conclusion of a dialectical analysis, such as that Hegel undertakes in the *Philosophy of Right*, leads in his view, to an alteration in the object of investigation. At the end of such an investigation we have before us a new object. This is a point that Hegel puts clearly in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*:

In fact, in the alteration of the knowledge, the object itself alters for it too, for the knowledge that was present was essentially a knowledge of the object: as the knowledge changes, so too does the object, for it essentially belonged to this knowledge.³³

Marx, on the other hand, regards the original object of investigation as unchanged by the dialectical analysis which it undergoes. Although he recognizes there has inevitably been a change in our perception and understanding, this change in our understanding cannot of itself alter the world. Because in his view a dialectical account can alter its object, Hegel offers his readers in the *Philosophy of Right* the rational peace with the world which 'knowledge provides'.³⁴ But Marx in *Capital* offers nothing of the sort. Like Hegel he hopes to advance the individual's comprehension of his society through his analysis in the work so that the individual instead of being the unconscious subject of society's forces becomes their conscious subject. However, unlike Hegel, he provides this knowledge not to imbue the individual with a sense of resignation towards the present state of affairs – because all problems are in the end intellectual problems – but to imbue the individual with the impetus and knowledge with which to transform society. The object of knowledge is not changed merely by contemplating it. We can change the world only with the help of our practical activity.³⁵

Marx argues that money becomes an object of worship and greed because it embodies an estranged social power.³⁶ Although it is only individuals in society who can impart to coin and paper notes the property of being universally exchangeable, this power does not appear as the power of those individuals. It appears rather as a power possessed solely by those things which serve as money. Just as 'one man is king only because other men stand in the relation of subject to him, and they, on the contrary,

imagine that they are subjects because he is king'³⁷ so the appearance that money is all-powerful, and all other commodities are inferior substitutes to it is also unavoidable. The condition under which money can serve as a universal medium of exchange is that the society alienate its powers to it. Identity is established through difference; no doubt a great deal is gained in return in terms of convenience and potential for the generation of wealth through society alienating its powers in this way, but there are also costs in terms of social solidarity, disorganization of production, avarice and greed which have to be met. These costs do not become easier to accept because we now properly understand how they arise. Indeed in Marx's view in coming to understand the difficulties which money brings in its train society might be changed to overcome them.

In a striking passage in the *Grundrisse* Marx has this to say about the power of money:

It has been said and may be said that this is precisely the beauty and greatness of it; this spontaneous interconnexion, this material and mental metabolism which is independent of the knowing and willing of individuals, and which presupposes their reciprocal independence and . . . certainly, this objective connexion is preferable to the lack of any connexion or to a merely local connexion resting on blood ties, or on primeval, natural or master-servant relations. Equally certain is that individuals cannot gain mastery over their own social interconnexions before they have created them. But it is an insipid notion to conceive of this merely objective bond as a spontaneous, natural attribute inherent in individuals and inseparable from their nature (in antithesis to their conscious knowing and willing). This bond is their product. It is a historic product. It belongs to a specific phase of their development. The alien and independent character in which it presently exists *vis à vis* individuals proves only that the latter are still engaged in the creation of the conditions of their social life, and that they have not yet begun, on the basis of these conditions to live it.³⁸

To comprehend the complex role of money as universal equivalent is to see why that role must be revolutionized to realize fully the social powers embodied in its present uncoordinated private use. The role of money in society remains unchanged at the end of Marx's dialectical analysis, but in seeing it differently we are in a position through our practical activity 'to alter that role'.

The fetishism of commodities

Marx's account of the fetishism of commodities has rightly been the subject of a great deal of interest since this section of *Capital* is perhaps the most methodologically profound in the whole of Marx's work. Georg Lukacs in his seminal work *History and Class Consciousness* (1922) was one of the first to point to the wider significance of Marx's account of fetishism in *Capital*. Lukacs connects the account with the problem of reification in Marx's thinking. In Lukacs's view Marx's account of the commodity shows how the hostile objectification of human powers takes place in a market society. According to Lukacs 'commodity exchange' stamps its imprint upon the whole consciousness of man: 'There is no natural form in which human relations can be cast, no way in which man can bring his physical and psychical qualities into play without their being subjected increasingly to this reifying process'.³⁹ With his analysis Lukacs not only set in train the whole recent discussion of the concept of alienation in Marx but also provided a vital starting point for the speculations of the most important figures in the Frankfurt school.

Marx thinks himself to be dealing with a common enough phenomenon in accounting for commodity fetishism. Commodity fetishism gives rise, he believes, to that inordinate longing for acquiring things through their purchase in markets, stores and shops. Commodity fetishism leads to a desire to acquire goods not so much for their use or enjoyment, but primarily for the sake of possession. It is, in practice, of course, difficult to distinguish the two types of desire but Marx's particular concern was to explain the latter: the urge to spend and acquire for its own sake. What accounts for this urge, in Marx's view, is that in the process of purchase and sale an exchange takes place between things, which is also a social relation between individuals. By this Marx does not mean that the seller and buyer get to know each other through the transaction (though this might well occur), but that in the exchange of money with goods two essential social processes are brought together, namely production and consumption. The sale and purchase of the commodity is the sole means whereby the activities of the producers are formally linked with each other. As a producer my labour is directly connected with that of other producers only through an exchange relation

between things. Thus, the commodity exchange has a far wider significance than is apparent at the time to the partners in the exchange. Commodity exchange is the conduit through which all products must flow if their producers are to be gainfully employed. It is this ever present, but not visible, wider significance that drives individuals on, in Marx's view, continually to repeat the transaction even where the material motive for making further acquisitions is apparently absent.

Marx's approach to the commodity is an odd one for a thinker who claims to be a materialist. The materialist philosophers with whom Marx was acquainted such as Locke, Condillac, Helvetius and Feuerbach took sensation as the ultimate source and touchstone of our knowledge of the external world. To be certain that an idea was correct, according to these thinkers, it was sufficient to know that it corresponded precisely with the impressions made on our senses by an object. Experience, in the narrow sense of what we observe in looking around us, was the great store from which all knowledge of the world might be drawn. These materialists placed our knowledge of the world in a hierarchical order with those ideas which corresponded to the most immediate and simple perceptions standing at the apex. Locke, for instance, saw the ideas of whiteness, bitterness, etc. as representing more faithfully the properties of a substance than our more complex ideas which depicted various properties as co-existing with one another in one body.⁴⁰ Locke here takes the appearance of a body to be a more reliable indication of its nature than the complex ideas we might impute to it. Marx though in *Capital* takes a contrary view. As I suggested in the previous chapter he, like Hegel, takes appearances often to be misleading and looks to our theoretical ideas to provide a more comprehensive account of the nature of things. This he shows in his approach to the commodity in the section on *Fetishism*:

A commodity appears, at first sight, a very trivial thing, and easily understood. Its analysis shows that it is in reality a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties.⁴¹

Marx would agree with the traditional materialist about the reality of the existence of the (external) things we observe, however, he would deny the validity of many of the 'ideas' we immediately perceive. Like Hegel, Marx gives precedence in our

knowledge to the intellectually formed ideas of the understanding (*Vorstellungen*) over the impressionistically formed 'ideas' of the senses.

Indeed, the way in which Marx approaches the phenomenon of commodity fetishism might well be taken as a good example of what Hegel means by his conception of the scientific thinker 'going behind' the 'so-called curtain' of appearance, 'as much in order that we may thereby see, as there may be something behind there which can be seen'.⁴² The source of the phenomenon of fetishism becomes known only through an analysis which penetrates its outward form. Marx recognizes that this is a difficult task because the 'characters that stamp products as commodities . . . have already acquired the stability of natural, self-understood forms of social life'.⁴³ None the less, the critical powers of the human mind are such that the underlying reality can be revealed. Thus far Marx shares Hegel's understanding of appearance in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. However their paths diverge from this point on. Hegel believes that going beyond appearance not only reveals the reality underlying appearance, but also that this reality is ultimately nothing other than *self*. He says in the *Phenomenology*: 'We see that in the inner world of appearance . . . the understanding in fact experiences only itself'.⁴⁴ Marx no doubt would acknowledge, on the one hand, that the ideas the thinker uses to explain an appearance are the thinker's own product and in this respect part of the self, but he would diverge from Hegel's idealism in arguing, on the other hand, that the ideas summarized an aspect of our experience which lay beyond the self. For Marx the reality that lies behind appearance is as real and as external to the self as is the initial appearance or phenomenon. Theoretical comprehension indeed reveals a different world from that of the ordinary understanding but this is not a world that exists only for theoretical comprehension. Marx counters Hegel's idealist view that science knows only itself, with the view that theoretical comprehension is a comprehension of concrete forces and processes. The world cannot for Marx be fully brought within self-consciousness.

Commodity fetishism is, Marx thinks, a form in which the objects of consumption necessarily appear in capitalist society. Through the theoretical comprehension of capitalism we can discover the cause of this odd form. It derives from the fact that

fundamental social productive relations take on the appearance of relations among things. The producer is led by this appearance into a desire to acquire commodities for its own sake. The commodity appears imbued with a mystical power. An observer might be led to think that this desire and mystery would disappear once the producer was properly apprised of the underlying causes – through perhaps reading the relevant sections of *Capital*! But Marx is not as sanguine as this. However convincingly the underlying reason for commodity fetishism can be shown to be the strange form in which the acquisition of wealth takes place under capitalism, this in no way alters the form in which commodity transactions in fact take place. The producers will still encounter their collective output as objects which can be acquired simply by being exchanged for notes and coins, even though they may well be aware that the success of any commodity transaction depends on a vast number of other social relations. The distinction between appearance and essence with Marx gives rise not to one reality, as with Hegel, but to two conflicting realities: the reality of appearance and the reality of the processes uncovered by theoretical comprehension.

G. A. Cohen, in *Karl Marx's, Theory of History: A Defence*, provides an excellent summary of the theory of commodity fetishism. He rightly points out that to 'make a fetish of something . . . is to invest it with powers it does not itself have'.⁴⁵ He stresses, as have I, that commodity fetishism 'does not result from a thought process, but from a process of production'.⁴⁶ Cohen points out that the term derives from the study of religions, where it has been similarly argued that objects have been attributed with powers they do not in reality possess. The healing powers attributed to visits to religious shrines or to touching a variety of religious objects – like the bones of saints – are cases in point. But Cohen argues that with commodity fetishism there is one essential difference: the powers that are wrongly attributed to commodities are not imparted to them by thought alone but arise from the actual role commodities play in the economy. With commodities 'the mind registers the fetish. It does not, as in the religious case, create it'.⁴⁷

The existence of commodities, in Cohen's view, gives rise to a duality in our experience. Two worlds emerge: the formal where commodity exchange appears as merely an exchange between

things, and the material where commodity exchange is also seen as a complicated social relation among producers. Because the formal world is the more visible it takes precedence in the minds of producers over the material world.

Cohen thinks the doctrine can be summarized in five essential points:

1. The labour of a person takes the form of the exchange-value of things.
2. Things do have exchange-values.
3. They do not have it autonomously.
4. They appear to have it autonomously.
5. Exchange value, and the illusion accompanying it, are not permanent, but peculiar to a determinate form of society.⁴⁸

What takes the eye of producers is the embodiment of exchange-value (money) in things, and not the embodiment of their labour in exchange value. Consequently, exchange-value appears to them as a quality inherent in things and not something which derives from the social organization of production. And this is how commodities are invested with powers which they do not possess, but this illusion can be removed only when the particular form of production is altered.

Cohen connects the phenomenon of commodity fetishism with the phenomenon of capital fetishism also discussed by Marx. Marx argues that *capital* is invested with the same kind of magical properties as commodities by the process of production. Capital is seen as itself capable of generating wealth, giving rise to new markets and expanding itself, although in fact capital merely embodies the wealth generated by labour. However, there is nothing inherent in the various forms which capital takes: money, loans, machines, buildings and land which makes them productive in their own right. Again it is only the particular form of the social organization of production which imparts to these things their power to generate wealth. Once the social organization of production is altered capital is stripped of its seemingly magical powers.⁴⁹

Cohen rightly places great stress on the transformation of the economy as holding the key to the unmasking of commodity and capital fetishism. Fetishism, Cohen strikingly argues, 'protects capitalism', and the role of communism – with which Marx hopes ultimately to replace capitalism – is, he continues, to 'liberate the

content'.⁵⁰ Cohen means by this phrase that the goal of the communist organization of society is to put back into the hands of the producers the powers which are alienated from them and are disguised through the fetishism of commodities and capital. The value embodied in things should directly reflect the labour expended upon them, and the wealth of the society be collectively controlled. Planning has to take the place of the chaotic, uncoordinated organization of the market.

Cohen's account draws together in a colourful way the main threads of Marx's argument. It is interesting though that he leaves to one side the most important epistemological points raised by Marx's doctrine. Cohen speaks of Marx's analysis resting on the assumption of the existence of two worlds, one formal and visible and the other material but less apparent. But the problem which Marx's method poses is, how do these two worlds relate to one another? Is one world more real than the other? Cohen puts the stress on the material and conveys the impression that communism is merely a technical answer to a pressing social problem, and so overlooks the fact that commodity fetishism becomes apparent only when Marx's epistemological premisses are adopted, and can equally be resolved only if one shares Marx's ethical premisses. But Marx's dialectic has unavoidable prescriptive implications which arise from the epistemological position he takes on the relation of the two worlds to which Cohen refers.

With commodity fetishism both the appearance of the commodity exchange as a relation between things (the formal world), and the underlying process of capitalist production for the market (the material world) which explains this are real. This view is in marked contrast to that of Hegel who argues that appearance is subsumed, once it is explained, under the explanation. Hegel says at the conclusion of the section on the understanding in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* that 'the sensible world is regarded by self-consciousness as an existence which is only appearance or difference, which in itself has no being'.⁵¹ Thus through theoretical comprehension the unity of self-consciousness is restored and the otherness of existence subverted. But in *Capital* Marx takes a diametrically opposed view. In the fetishism of commodities 'the relations connecting the labour of one individual with that of others appear, not as direct social relations in their work,

but as they really are, material relations among persons and social relations between things'.⁵² The appearance with Marx truly persists, its being does not disappear in the unity of self-consciousness. Indeed, through the theoretical comprehension of fetishism self-consciousness finds itself at odds with itself and the world. Through the analysis of commodity fetishism the self-conscious individual becomes aware of a misleading form of existence, but finds that nothing can be done at the level of thinking and understanding to remove the source of this confusion. Theoretical knowledge does not of itself resolve the confusions of the world. As with the value form:

The fact that only in the particular form of production we are dealing with . . . the specific social character of private labour carried on independently consists in the equality of every kind of that labour by virtue of its being human labour which character, therefore, assumes in the product the form of value – this fact appears to those caught up in the relations of commodity production, notwithstanding the above discovery, to be just as real and final as the fact that after the discovery by science of the component gases of air, the atmosphere itself remained unaltered.⁵³

In understanding that the appearance of the exchange of commodities conflicts with its actual nature we do not undermine nor remove this appearance. The contrast between the two arises from the process of commodity exchange itself. Thus so long as commodity exchange continues those caught up in commodity transactions will still be susceptible to commodity fetishism. For commodity fetishism to cease to have a hold on our knowledge and perception of the world requires the transition to communism. Communism resolves not only the technical problem of the domination of production by an uncontrolled process of market exchange but also removes the clouds of confusion in the minds of the producers about their own economic and social relations.

There is an interesting contrast here not only between Hegel and Marx's use of dialectic but also between Marx and Kant's understanding of the term. Kant sees that a conflict between the requirements of human reason and the conclusions that can be justified in terms of our direct knowledge of experience is inevitable. This he calls dialectic because 'we take the subjective necessity of a connection of our concepts . . . for an objective necessity in the determination of things in themselves'.⁵⁴

Reason, in Kant's view, demands a completeness and coherence of our experience which experience itself does not justify. This leads to what he calls transcendental illusion.

It is most interesting that Kant should observe that 'this is an *illusion* which can no more be prevented than we can prevent the sea appearing higher at the horizon than at the shore',⁵⁵ because Marx also speaks of the unavoidability of the illusion of commodity fetishism, even though we may be fully aware of its cause. But this unavoidable dialectic is not for Marx one that pertains to reason alone. With Hegel, Marx would argue that Kant shows 'too great a tenderness for things' in his dialectic, for instead of finding reason wanting in seeking too great a coherence in the world Kant should have been more prepared to discover within appearance itself the origin of dialectic.⁵⁶ Thus, though agreeing with Kant that conflicts between the demands of reason and what we observe in experience are inevitable, Marx does not conclude that it is our reason that is at fault for being over-ambitious. For Marx, reason can detect a unity and a coherence underlying our experience which is not merely one imputed by our cognitive faculties but also describes the objects of experience as they are in themselves. A natural dialectic operates in our understanding in capitalist society which gives rise to phenomena such as commodity fetishism, but this natural dialectic, although discovered by reason, is not caused by it. Reason for Marx simply brings out the contradictory nature of our experience, but not as with Hegel to lay to rest those contradictions but, rather, to heighten them to the point where their only resolution can be sought in practice. Whereas Kant's dialectic leads to the imputation of contradictions or illusions solely to our reason, and Hegel's dialectic leads to the suppression of contradictions in knowledge and self-consciousness, Marx's dialectic leads to the raising of the contradictions of experience into issues to be resolved by political action. Kant discovers contradictions in reason which leave things as they stand, Hegel discovers 'contradictions in things', which lead to their dissolution, Marx discovers contradictions in our understanding of things which equally leaves things as they stand, but at the same time demands their overthrow.

Appearance with Marx is, therefore, both real and potentially deceptive, whereas with Hegel appearance is but a moment in

the forward development of consciousness, and that it is potentially deceptive merely underlines its essential unreality.⁵⁷ The two worlds of appearance and essence with Hegel ultimately become one, whereas with Marx they remain distinct and persist separately from one another. With Kant appearance is the rock upon which our knowledge of the world is founded and, although it may deceive, the vital role it plays in our knowledge cannot be superseded. There is no deeper knowledge with Kant than the understanding of appearance, whereas Hegel and Marx point to a profounder basis to our knowledge in the conceptual generalizations of our reason. Hegel sees these conceptual generalizations – ideas – as what is ultimately real and as in some way totally embodying our experience. For Marx ideas can account – sometimes comprehensively – for our experience, but they do not represent its summation. Marx counters Hegel's idealism with a realism similar to that of Kant's which insists upon the persistence of appearance even when unmasked as such by rational thought. Those external stimuli which gave rise to appearance do not vanish once the appearance is explained. Unlike with Hegel, knowledge and its object are never identical with Marx and Kant.

That our knowledge and its object are in Marx's mind always distinct has important implications for Marx's dialectical critique of capitalism. It is a point he returns to repeatedly in the early sections of *Capital*. The theory of value of the classical political economists which shows that the relative values of commodities are determined by the amount of socially necessary labour time incorporated in each, Marx sees as an example of a theory penetrating a misleading appearance, in this instance the continually fluctuating prices of commodities, and disclosing the underlying reality. However, this discovery removes the appearance of mere accidentality from the determination of the magnitude of the values of products, but in no way alters its concrete form.⁵⁸ Although the political economist and his readers have understood what lies behind the accidental appearance of price fluctuations, for those involved in capitalist production the accidental appearance of value determination continues to assert itself. Indeed the law of value, as Marx calls it, exerts itself behind the backs of individuals 'like an overriding law of nature'.⁵⁹

Changes in our understanding cannot affect this process although they may well clarify it for us. Commodity exchange and its effects may take on a clearer pattern in our eyes, but this will not ameliorate its damaging effects. Thus, with Marx a tension arises between the theoretical insight afforded to us by our knowledge of the world and its continued contrary appearance. The theoretical coherence of our understanding of capitalism clashes with the palpable empirical incoherence of such an economy. The more we know of the system the less we are at ease with it; an imperative arises within our knowledge itself that the economy we observe be in fact made as coherent to those who work in it as it is in its theoretical explanation. This can only be achieved by empirically transforming the economy. As Marx puts it, 'the whole mystery of commodities, all the magic and necromancy that surrounds the products of labour so long as they take the form of commodities vanishes only when we come to other forms of production'.⁶⁰

Thus, that Marx revives Kant's title, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in the subtitle to *Capital*: 'a critique of political economy', is significant. Like Kant, Marx wants to draw attention to the contradictions which necessarily arise in attempting to conceive the world rationally. Marx establishes limits to the *understanding* of the political economists resting on a Kantian view of a rationally organized human experience. With Hegel Marx thinks that reason supersedes understanding through revoking the fixed ideas (*Vorstellungen*) of the ordinary consciousness. Thus, he departs from Kant's critical enterprise by attributing to our cognitive faculties the power to comprehend properly the contradictory nature of our experience. Unlike Kant, Marx does not leave to a practical reason, divorced from theoretical reason, the role of synthesizing our experience into one coherent totality. Rather, Marx follows Hegel in uniting theoretical with practical reason, but for Marx the synthesis sought is not one which takes place in thought alone, as occurs with Hegel's spirit. Marx looks for a synthesis in human society. Communism for him represents the acceptance and implementation of the ideas of reason in practice. In trying to implement a rational plan for society the truth about our ideas and circumstances is revealed.

Notes

1. *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* (ed. T Bottomore), Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1983, p. 511. See also Marx's letter to Engels, 22 June 1867, *Mark-Engels Werke*, 31, pp. 305–6.
2. *Capital*, Vol. 1, pp. 7–8; *Das Kapital*, Vol. 23, *Mark-Engels Werke*, pp. 11–12.
3. *Capital* I, p. 8; *Das Kapital*, 23, p. 12.
4. *Timon of Athens*, Act 4, Sc. 3. Cf. *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1970, p. 166; *Marx-Engels Werke*, *Ergänzungsband*, I, p. 563–4.
5. *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, p. 167; *Werke*, *Ergänzungsband* I, p. 564.
6. *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, p. 168; *Werke*, *Ergänzungsband* I, p. 565.
7. Darimon was a French journalist and politician who enjoyed some success as a radical in the 1860s, eventually defecting to the Bonapartist cause in 1864.
8. *Grundrisse*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973, p. 126; *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, Europa Verlag, Frankfurt/Vienna, p. 46. Darimon's 'final judgement is: abolish the privilege of gold and silver, degrade them to the rank of all other commodities. Then you no longer have the specific evils of gold and silver money. . . . You abolish all evils.' Cf. R. Rosdolsky, *The Making of Marx's Capital*, tr. P. Burgess, Pluto Press, London, 1980, p. 99.
9. *Grundrisse*, p. 127; *Grundrisse der Kritik*, p. 46.
10. *Grundrisse*, p. 145; *Grundrisse der Kritik*, p. 63.
11. *Capital*, p. 132; *Das Kapital*, p. 146.
12. *Grundrisse*, p. 221; *Grundrisse der Kritik*, pp. 132–3.
13. *Capital*, p. 48; *Das Kapital*, p. 63.
14. Cf. the discussion of force in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Oxford, 1979, pp. 79–103; *Werke* 3, pp. 107–37 and the discussion of measure in the *Science of Logic*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1969, pp. 327–89; *Werke* 5, pp. 387–445.
15. *Capital*, p. 48; *Das Kapital*, p. 63.
16. Cf. D. Sayer, *Marx's Method*, pp. 24–30.
17. *Science of Logic*, pp. 666–81; *Werke* 6, pp. 354–74.
18. *Capital*, p. 48; *Das Kapital*, p. 63.
19. *Grundrisse*, p. 165; *Grundrisse der Kritik*, p. 83.
20. 'Human labour power in motion or human labour creates value, but it is not value itself.' *Capital*, p. 51; *Das Kapital*, p. 65.
21. *Capital*, p. 52; *Das Kapital*, p. 66.
22. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 2, p. 64; *Werke* 19, p. 72.
23. *Capital*, pp. 51–2; *Das Kapital*, p. 66.
24. *Capital*, p. 56; *Das Kapital*, p. 70.
25. *Capital*, p. 57; *Das Kapital*, p. 71.
26. *Science of Logic*, p. 522; *Werke* 6, pp. 177–8.

27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Criminal Law Revision Committee, 16th Report, *Prostitution in the Street*, Cmnd 9329, HMSO, London, 1985.
30. *Capital*, p. 57n.; *Das Kapital*, p. 72n. The same term is used by Hegel in discussing identity, difference and contradiction in the *Science of Logic*, Book 2, ch. 2. Marx no doubt has the discussion in mind when dealing with the relationship of the two poles in commodity exchange.
31. *Capital*, pp. 131–2; *Das Kapital*, p. 145.
32. Ibid.
33. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 54; *Werke* 3, p. 78.
34. *Philosophy of Right*, tr. T. H. Knox, Oxford, 1969, p. 12; *Werke* 7, p. 27.
35. *Theses on Feuerbach*, Thesis XI: 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is, to change it.' Thesis II: 'In practice man must prove the truth, that is, actuality and power, this-sidedness of his thinking.'
36. *Economics and Philosophical Manuscripts*, p. 168; *Werke*, *Ergänzungsband*, p. 565. 'Money is the alienated ability of mankind.'
37. *Capital*, p. 57; *Das Kapital*, p. 72.
38. *Grundrisse*, p. 161–2; *Grundrisse der Kritik*, p. 38.
39. G. Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*, Merlin, London, 1968, p. 100. 'We need only think of marriage', Lukacs continues, 'and can remind ourselves of the way in which Kant, for example, described the situation with the naivety and cynical frankness peculiar to great thinkers. "Sexual community," he says, "is the reciprocal use made by one person of the sexual organs and faculties of another." ' For a full discussion of Kant's view of marriage see H. Williams, *Kant's Political Philosophy*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1983, pp. 114–25.
40. J. Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Collier-Macmillan, London, 1965, Book IV, ch 4, pp. 320–1.
41. *Capital*, p. 71; *Das Kapital*, p. 85.
42. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 103; *Werke* 3, pp. 135–6.
43. *Capital*, p. 75; *Das Kapital*, p. 86.
44. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 103; *Werke* 3, p. 135.
45. G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*, Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 115.
46. Ibid., p. 115.
47. Ibid., p. 116.
48. Ibid., pp. 116–17.
49. For a fuller discussion of Marx's theory of capital fetishism which he thinks most vividly evident in the writings of Dr Richard Price, see H. Williams, 'Karl Marx and Richard Price', *Enlightenment and Dis-sent*, No. 3, 1984, pp. 94–6.
50. G. A. Cohen, *Marx's Theory of History*, p. 129.
51. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 105; *Werke* 3, p. 139. See also J. Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, tr. S. Chernik

and J. Heckman, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1974, p. 143; 'In knowing nature, then, understanding knows itself, its knowledge of another is a self-knowledge, a knowledge of knowledge'.

52. *Capital*, p. 73; *Das Kapital*, p. 87.

53. *Capital*, p. 74; *Das Kapital*, p. 89.

54. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B353/A297.

55. *Ibid.*

56. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, III, p. 451. *Werke* 20, p. 359. See also *Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 1 (Hegel's lesser *Logic*), tr. W. Wallace, Oxford, 1975, p. 77; *Werke* 8, p. 126: Kant's only motive 'was an excess of tenderness for the things of the world. The blemish of contradiction, it seems, could not be allowed to mar the essence of the world; but there could be no objection to attach it to the thinking reason, to the essence of mind.'

57. Cf. *Science of Logic*, p. 509; *Werke* 6, p. 161. Book 2, section 2, ch 2, 'The dissolution of appearance'.

58. *Capital*, p. 75-6; *Das Kapital*, p. 89-90.

59. *Ibid.*

60. *Ibid.*

8

Contradiction and Dialectical Transition in Marx

Contradiction

The idea of contradiction represents an extremely important category in Hegel's dialectic. In his *Logic* he employs the category in a natural and ontological way. In speaking of contradiction Hegel speaks not only of a logical category denoting an error in a piece of argument but also of a category which can be applied with certainty to the world. In contrasting the idea of contradiction with the idea of identity in the *Science of Logic* he says, for example, that contradiction can be described with greater justification as a law since 'everything is inherently contradictory'.¹ Hegel is anxious to get away from the idea which, in his view, is all too prevalent in everyday thinking that contradiction is somehow inessential or a less significant category than identity or difference:

For as against contradiction, identity is merely the determination of a simple immediate, of dead being; but contradiction is the root of all movement and vitality; it is only in so far as something has a contradiction within it that it moves, has an urge and activity.²

There is no doubt that Marx shares Hegel's view of the importance of the category of contradiction, but he does not see the category in the same ontological light. For Marx contradiction is, as with other categories, a means through which we make sense of our experience. With Kant, Marx sees categories as shaping our experience rather than creating it. Marx would probably agree with Hegel that the category of contradiction sheds greater light on our experience than does the category of identity but the belief that 'everything is inherently contradictory' (although to be

found in Engels's work)³ is not one to which Marx would subscribe. Marx appears to see the category of contradiction as of experiential and methodological, rather than ontological, significance. Hegel wants to suggest that prior to any human experience of something it can be regarded as contradictory. Marx, I shall argue, seems to suggest that we cannot speak of such a world.

Hegel's analysis of contradiction has to be followed through to its conclusion to discover one further (major) reason why Marx would not fully accept his analysis of the category. For Hegel a contradiction is ultimately dissolved in its *ground*. Contradiction, like all finite things, shows itself to be transient and a nullity. 'Every determination, every finite thing,' Hegel says 'is essentially a unity of distinct and distinguishable movements, which, by virtue of the determinate, essential difference pass into contradictory moments. This contradictory side of course resolves itself into nothing, withdrawing into its negative unity'.⁴ Now what saves this nothing from becoming an absolute nullity is Hegel's further doctrine that the negative is also positive. The dissolved determination or concrete thing 'is no less the contradiction resolved: it is the ground that contains and supports its determinations'.⁵ For Hegel it is not that things are that point to their infinite reality but rather it is the fact that they are 'disrupted within themselves' and 'inherently self-contradictory', in other words that they are not. Contradiction demonstrates the non-reality of the world for Hegel: 'The truth is that the absolute is, because the finite is the inherently self-contradictory opposition, because it is not . . . the *non-being* of the finite is the *being* of the absolute'.⁶

Needless to say, Marx takes exception to the mystical and idealist aspect of Hegel's account of contradiction. Contradictory aspects of our experiences are not for Marx resolved in the 'being of the absolute', or the 'non-being of the finite'. Because they reflect processes taking place in the outside world, he believes contradictions are resolved in a totally different way. We can gain an understanding of Marx's view of the matter from this passage on the metamorphosis of commodities in *Capital*.

We see that the exchange of commodities comprises [*einschliesst*] contradictory and mutually exclusive [*ausschliessende*] relations. The (wider) development of the commodity does not remove these

contradictions but rather provides the form within which they can move. This is generally the method through which real contradictions resolve themselves (*sich lösen*). For instance, it is a contradiction that one body consistently falls towards another and just as consistently flies away with it. The ellipse is a form of motion within which this contradiction is both realized and resolved'.⁷

Marx thinks there is an analogy between the way in which commodities circulate and the elliptical manner in which the planets revolve. Both movements express and make possible contradictory relations. Just as the planets can be regarded as simultaneously falling into and away from the sun, so the two poles of the commodity relation, money and commodity, can be regarded both as distinct yet wholly dependent on one another. Money is, indeed, a reliable and independent store of wealth: but only so long as it is accepted as the universal equivalent for all other commodities. Equally commodities are universally exchangeable only through the institution of money. These are the 'contradictory and exclusive relations' of which Marx speaks. But unlike Hegel, Marx does not see these contradictions as reduced to nothing by the dialectical analysis he undertakes. Indeed Marx does not see contradictions in our understanding of the social and natural world being resolved in this way at all. 'Real contradictions,' as he says, 'are resolved by their finding "room to move" '. Such experiential contradictions must find a way in which to develop and express themselves, consequently they have to be resolved by an adjustment in the environment itself. Just as the universe accommodates the elliptical motion of the planets, so in a capitalist society the producers have to accommodate the contradictory relations of the commodity.

There is a distinct difference here, therefore, in Marx's understanding of contradiction. Marx agrees with Hegel that our experience of contradiction is real and profound, but against Hegel Marx would argue that this real experience of contradiction cannot be overcome simply by gaining a higher level of comprehension with the concept of ground. (For Marx the contradictory relations remain real although they are accommodated in a wider development and form.) The movement of the planets is still a simultaneous moving towards and away from the sun even when the path of their movement is explained to take an elliptical form. The ellipse rests on these contradictory relations. Similarly the

contradictory relations of the commodity and money persist within the process of the circulation of commodities. Indeed the circulation of commodities just as much expresses these contradictory relations as it resolves them. To reflect this the simple formula for the circulation of commodities which Marx uses: C-M-C, can be broken up into two complementary yet antithetical moments: C-M and M-C, representing the exchange of the commodity for a fixed sum of money and the exchange of a fixed sum of money for another commodity.

Say's Law and the unity of opposites

There is a similarity between the notational form in which Marx expresses the circulation of commodities and the notational form Hegel uses in the *Science of Logic* to deal with the various kinds of syllogism. This is a similarity which was also noted by Lenin in his *Conspectus of Hegel's Science of Logic* which he undertook in the Berne Library in 1914-16.⁸ It is such similarities which probably led Lenin to claim in a famous passage that 'it is impossible completely to understand Marx's *Capital*, and especially its first chapter, without having thoroughly studied and understood the whole of Hegel'. Consequently, half a century later none of the Marxists understood Marx!!⁹ Lenin had a number of other illuminating things to say about Hegel and Marx in this *Conspectus*. As Althusser points out, Lenin's contribution to philosophy cannot be lightly dismissed.¹⁰ However, much of his philosophical work such as *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* was completed before he undertook a systematic study of Hegel's philosophy. So we cannot look to Lenin for a clear guide to Marx's method. By his own admission the *Conspectus* must be regarded as one of his most advanced works on the topic. And although Lenin clears important ground in the *Conspectus*, he does not systematically relate Hegel's and Marx's dialectic. Lenin usefully detects the broad similarities and differences but not the nuances in the relationship.¹¹ Here Lenin notes that Marx borrows from the *Logic* the notational form but does not add that Marx also employs the technique of splitting the formula (C-M-C, I-P-U with Hegel) into its constituent parts: C-M/M-C, I-P/P-U.

This distinction enables Marx to get more easily to the contra-

dictory relations which persist in the circulation of commodities. C-M represents for Marx the first metamorphosis or sale. The commodity is exchanged for money. Notes or coins replace the commodity I formerly had in my hand. But this process cannot take place automatically. Not every commodity that is advanced for sale gains a buyer. Today the product satisfies a social want. Tomorrow the article may either altogether or partially be superseded by some other more appropriate product.¹² Each producer anticipates a potential market for his commodity and anticipates the price at which it may be sold. But even the best prepared commodity producers may well have their hopes dashed. Because the capitalist economic system is one in which branches of the same industry develop independently of one another, producers may find that in entering the market they are met by a competitor with a superior product or a competitor who is able to offer the same commodity at a lower price. As Marx aptly puts it, 'commodities are in love with money, but "the course of true love never does run smooth"' ¹³ The sale of commodities has a dialectic of its own. In taking commodities (C-M) to the market their owners:

Find out that the same division of labour that turns them into independent private producers also frees the social process of production and the relation of the individual producers to each other within the process from all dependence on the will of the producers, and that the seeming mutual independence of the individuals has as its complement a system of general and mutual material dependence.¹⁴

In one respect the commodity which is brought to the market is just the same as money. Under normal circumstances it can be transformed immediately into money by being sold. But in another respect a commodity is precisely the opposite of money, as a change in market conditions or a lack of suitability in the commodity itself will rapidly demonstrate. In dialectical terms money and commodities are opposites whose fates are necessarily linked together. Marx puts the point in markedly Hegelian terms:

In this opposition commodities are use-values and money as exchanged values stand over against one another. On the other hand both opposing sides are commodities, unities therefore of use- and exchange-value. But this unity of differences manifests itself at two opposite poles, and at each pole in an opposite way.¹⁵

However, he does not follow Hegel in showing that these oppositions 'dissolve' in their 'ground'. Rather in, Marx's view, these oppositions are precisely the forms which make possible and realize the transactions of the market.¹⁶

The first metamorphosis which takes place in the circulation of commodities the sale (M-C) is also, seen from the opposite point of view a purchase (C-M). There are no sellers where there are no buyers just as there are no buyers without there being sellers. On the basis of this unity of purchase and sale the French economist J. B. Say and other economists subsequently have argued that the market for goods is of necessity always in equilibrium. Marx strongly attacks this idea saying that 'nothing can be more childish than this dogma. . . . If this means that the number of actual sales is equal to the number of purchases, it is mere tautology. But its real purpose is to prove that every seller brings his buyer to market with him. Nothing of the kind'.¹⁷ The sale of a commodity does imply that another person has bought, but this does not establish that everything which is put up for sale must be bought. Nor is it true to suggest that because a sale is completed and money has been placed in the hands of the seller that that person will always then buy. As Keynes recognized, on average, part of everyone's income is always saved, so that every sale will not bring about a purchase of a similar magnitude.

This notion that supply will always generate its own demand (or the identity of supply and demand) was known to Keynes as Say's Law. In *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* Keynes formulates the law in this way; 'Say's Law, that the aggregate demand price of output as a whole is equal to its aggregate demand supply price for all volumes of output, is equivalent to the proposition that there is no obstacle to full employment'.¹⁸ It is from his criticism of Say's Law that Keynes derives his well-known view that unemployment may arise from a lack of effective aggregate demand for goods. Essentially, however, Keynes's point is the same as that of Marx in *Capital*, namely, that although in one respect purchase and sale are identical, they are in another respect antithetical. To say that purchase and sale are one is also to say that an unsold commodity is useless. For Marx the identity of sale and purchase is expressed just as much in the normal smooth process of commerce as it is in the periodic economic crisis.¹⁹ More sales imply more purchases,

but fewer sales also imply fewer purchases. As Keynes was aware, therefore, there is no unique level in an economy where aggregate demand matches aggregate supply. 'Effective demand', as he puts it, 'instead of having an equilibrium value is an infinite range of values all admissible'.²⁰ It is interesting that Keynes does not acknowledge any direct debt to Marx in coming to this conclusion but he does recognize that his (for the English people in his time) novel ideas lived 'furtively, below the surface, in the underworlds of Karl Marx, Silvio Gesell or Major Douglas'.²¹

Keynes argues that the essential link in maintaining effective demand is investment. As individuals' expenditure will always fall short of their income (which Keynes assumes is all derived from present output) to bridge the gap between effective demand and the total output of the economy, investment in new machinery, roads, houses, etc. must be undertaken.²² In Marx's survey of the defects of Say's Law (which he attributes originally to Adam Smith in a different and less crude form),²³ he also regards investment in new capital as the key function that undermines Say's theory. But Marx comes to the point from a different perspective. In arguing that supply creates its own demand Say overlooks, in Marx's view, the element in the value of a product attributable to depreciation and replacement of raw materials. If all revenue from the sale of a product is regarded as attributable ultimately to either profit or wages then it seems plausible that it may be spent on other goods in the course of the year. However, the element in the value of the good attributable to capital depreciation is unlikely to result in further expenditure every year.²⁴ Machinery depreciates slowly and requires replacement over a long period. It is in the periodical nature of this investment that Marx sees, like Keynes, one of the main obstacles to full employment.

In his account of simple reproduction Marx divides the production of an economy as a whole into two departments, department one producing the means of production and department two producing the articles of consumption.²⁵ This distinction allows Marx to bring out, albeit in a different light, Keynes's theory of employment. Once divided in this way into one department that produces goods for the final use and enjoyment of individual consumers, and another which produces goods such

as machine-tools, oil, thread, and building materials, commodities used as capital goods and raw materials in the production process, it becomes clear that there is no necessary relation between the goods consumed by a society and the ones it produces. Indeed, the uncoordinated nature of capitalist production becomes ever more apparent. A sudden upsurge in demand in one year for a good intended for final consumption will lead to an upsurge in demand for capital goods in that line of production which it may be possible to meet only in the following year. But in that subsequent year the demand for the consumption good may have radically altered, possibly leaving the producer with a great deal of underutilized capacity. Paradoxically this new situation may not have worked its way through to the producers of the capital goods in Department II who may well still be increasing output in line with the previous year's demand. Far from the capitalist economy exhibiting a picture of spontaneously harmonized decision, it would appear, following Marx's account, that the possibilities of disruption are infinite. For Marx capitalist production has its own inherent limits. He sums up his views on Say's Law in this remarkable way:

The phrase that the value of the entire annual product must ultimately be paid by the consumer would be correct only if consumers were taken to comprise two really different kinds: individual consumers and production consumers. However, that one portion of the product must be consumed productively [in Keynesian terms, invested] means nothing other than that it must *function as capital* and not be consumed as revenue.²⁶

Marx argues therefore with Keynes that insufficient aggregate demand is generated by a society's total consumption pattern to assure full employment. The shortfall, if it is to be made up, must be met by investment. As Keynes discovered, the *post facto* identity of aggregate demand and aggregate supply (or purchase and sale) marks an underlying antithesis. The ever-present possibility of a capitalist economy sliding into recession because of insufficient aggregate demand provides one of Marx's most telling examples of a 'real contradiction'. Such a contradiction is accommodated not, as Hegel suggests, through its dissolving into its ground but by real and sometimes painful adjustments in the environment. In one sense high unemployment removes the contradiction in that fewer companies are producing new un-

wanted goods, but in another it maintains it in that there are fewer well-paid workers to stimulate aggregate demand.

Thus, what high unemployment provides is a form within which the contradiction can move. Far from being 'nullified' the contradiction is institutionalized in the fate of a group of individuals. What Marx calls the 'reserve army of the unemployed' in his view, 'belongs to capital quite as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost. Independently of the limits of the actual increase of population, it creates, for the changing needs of the self-expansion of capital, a mass of human material always ready for exploitation.'²⁷

The dialectical transition

Marx employs dialectic as his method of presentation in *Capital*. The main objective of any method of presentation must be to provide as clear an exposition as possible of the writer's conclusions. Marx appears to imply therefore that the conclusions he presents in *Capital* may well have been arrived at through non-dialectical means; however, in order to provide the reader with systematic knowledge the argument has been expounded in a dialectical manner. This suggests it is not the subject-matter of *Capital* that is dialectical but rather, the proper way of comprehending that subject matter. So capitalism itself is not, on the one hand, dialectical but, on the other hand, capitalism can only be fully understood dialectically.

I suggest that it is in this relation to its subject matter that Marx's employment of dialectic is different from Hegel's. For Hegel it is the subject matter itself or the 'world' – what he variously calls 'the world' 'the thing', or 'reality' – which is dialectical. Because the dialectical method conveys to Hegel what is the case about the world he confuses this view of truth with the world itself. The subject matter and the truth about it become one in the dialectic, because Hegel mistakenly believes the only reality is the one conveyed in objective thought. Marx strenuously opposes this view. Because Hegel rightly saw abstract thought as penetrating the heart of things in explaining them he 'fell into the illusion of conceiving the real as the product of thought concentrating itself, probing its own depths, and

unfolding out of itself'.²⁸ Rational thought can reconstruct the world for us in a comprehensible form but because this can be done does not mean, as Hegel appears to believe, that the world is purely and simply rational thought.

Transitions from one aspect of the subject matter to another form an important aspect of dialectical method. Both Marx and Hegel favour systematic transitions which reflect essential points about the subject and allow it to be presented as an interrelated whole. But because of the contrast between the comprehensive way in which Hegel sees dialectical thought and Marx's more modest view, transitions in *Capital* necessarily take on a different form from the form they take in Hegel's philosophy. Considerable doubts have been raised about the artificiality of Hegel's transitions.²⁹ Some, such as the transition from Being to Nothing to Becoming, at the beginning of the *Science of Logic*, appear to work well, but others such as the transition from the objective to the subjective logic through reciprocity appear far less plausible. Reciprocity in nature appears to be a far different thing from the reciprocity encountered in human relations. The self-conscious reciprocity required, for instance, in the implementation of a contract appears qualitatively different from the imposed or merely accidental reciprocity found in nature as occurs, for instance, in the symbiotic relationship.

I would argue, however, that an element of artificiality attends many of the transitions to be found in Hegel's work, precisely because Hegel wants to identify dialectical thought with the world. When a transition takes place from one category to the next in Hegel's *Phenomenology*, we not only take an element of the previous category with us but the world itself, leading to absolute knowledge which encompasses both thought and its object (reality). In one respect this defect in Hegel's presentation is excusable since in pursuing his aim of objectivity he wants to demonstrate that the transition takes place not simply in thought but within the object itself. In *Capital* Marx shares this aim and appears at times to have carried it out successfully. In his account of the accumulation of capital, for instance, he employs distinctions, such as that between manufacturing and industry, concentration and centralization of capital which accurately portray historically found distinctions.³⁰ The transition from the discussion of the circulation of commodities to the discussion of money which we

looked at in the last chapter appears also to present a significant historical transition. Marx, however, unlike Hegel, does not burden himself with the further (I would say impossible) task of showing that the categories used to denote these transitions *are* the world. Such categories, of course, help us to reconstruct the world in thought by illuminating transitions which occur naturally or historically but they ought not to be seen as identical with or replacing the world.

In Hegel's philosophy, spirit or the Absolute Idea develops from itself. The crude sense awareness with which the *Phenomenology of Spirit* begins and the bare being of the beginning of *The Science of Logic* are shown to be mere aspects of the totality, spirit or Absolute Idea. Sense awareness and being are shown to be mere shadows of the true reality. Quantity, quality, essence, appearance, existence and actuality all fall by the wayside in the onward progress of spirit. As Hegel puts it at the end of the *Logic*: 'All else is error, confusion, opinion, endeavour, caprice and transitoriness; the Absolute Idea alone is being, imperishable life, self-knowing truth, and is all truth'.³¹ In Marx's work *capital* is the totality within which the various aspects of the society move. But this totality does not wholly subsume or negate the reality and distinctiveness of the separate parts. The commodity with which *Capital* opens is indeed shown to be an integral part of the capitalist system, but Marx also stresses that it is a form which precedes the capitalist mode of production. Commodities were produced in ancient societies and circulated long before capitalist production took root. The category of money similarly cannot simply be subsumed under the totality of capitalist productive relations. Money in its various forms can be traced back to the very beginning of human society in Sumerian times. Under capitalism commodities, money and capital form an integral whole, but this was not always so: for Marx the particular is not extinguished in the universal.

Thus the transition which brings us to the emergence of capital itself in *Capital* is one which is in marked contrast to the kind of transition found in Hegel's philosophy. Marx makes it abundantly clear that the transition is not one which takes all reality with it nor is it one which occurs solely through the interplay of categories themselves. An actual historical transition is, rather, represented to us in terms of those categories:

The circulation of commodities is the starting point of capital. The production of commodities and their circulation in its mature form, commerce and trade, represent the historical presuppositions under which capital arises.³²

Capital first appears as the 'moneyed wealth' of merchants and usurers. Marx uses his formula for the circulation of commodities (C-M-C) to show how this occurs. Instead of the usual pattern being followed of commodities being sold to acquire other commodities, the merchant advances money to buy commodities in order to sell them. With the merchant the stress is on the form of circulation M-C-M(1). The usurer in contrast lends money to acquire more money M-M(1). But what occurs through both processes is that the person who advances money in the first instance gradually amasses more and more money which ultimately forms the basis for the introduction of capital. It is when such money-capital is invested in manufacture that we have the true beginning of capitalist production.

This transition which takes place in Marx's *Capital* seems an eminently plausible one. Not only can we envisage that this is how things took place historically but also this is what explains the working of capital today. There is no suggestion of ideas or concepts merely developing from themselves. Marx himself seems alive to the non-idealist aspects of his analysis. Contrary to Hegel's attempts to weave transitions solely from the interplay of categories he says of the transition from money to capital:

But we have no need to refer to the origin of capital in order to discover that the first form of appearance of capital is money. We see it daily under our very eyes. All new capital to commence with comes on the stage, i.e., the market . . . in the shape of money.³³

Here Marx seems to avoid the danger both of reifying the concept of capital and of supposing that external developments are somehow moved on by developments in thought. Capital appears as what it is: a particular sum of money used to employ an individual to produce goods with tools and raw materials supplied by the expenditure of the same sum of money.

The transition from money to capital is, none the less, a dialectical one. In Marx's view, there are a number of contra-

dictions in what he calls the 'general formula for capital': M-C-M.³⁴ Here money (M) is advanced to make more money (M(1)), but if all merchants buy cheap to sell dear no one stands to gain. Each merchant will be cheating the other and all merchants will be cheating the final consumer. Although this process of buying and selling may account for the surpluses gained by merchants from their transactions with consumers it provides no surplus to society considered as a whole. Merchants are simply better off because they sell their products to consumers for more than they are worth. All this amounts to is that the combined produce of the society is re-distributed in favour of merchants. Thus, although the emergence of capital is, on the one hand made possible by the buying and selling of commodities it is not, on the other hand, engendered by the process. Capital cannot exist without the circulation of commodities, but it does not arise solely within circulation.³⁵ This Marx sees as 'real' contradiction within capitalist economic relations. How is this contradiction resolved? Clearly Marx does not think it can be resolved merely by thinking the problem through. For the 'real contradiction' to be resolved some adjustment to the world (which our thought describes) must take place. The adjustment which takes place that resolves this contradiction is that a source for the surplus made possible by commodity circulation is found in a particular type of commodity transaction. Marx thinks this source may be found in the buying and selling of labour power. This is an activity which takes place within the sphere of circulation but which has implications running far beyond it. In labour power the capitalist finds on the market a commodity which has the property of being able to create more value than it itself embodies. The value of labour power is determined by the value of what is conventionally required to feed, clothe and reproduce the worker. This represents a fixed sum of money which the capitalist must advance in wages, whereas the capitalist can use that labour power to produce a commodity whose value is far in excess of what is laid out in wages. It is on this formula that the success of capitalism rests. The real contradiction in the general formula of capital is 'resolved' for Marx in the further and real contradiction of the exploitation of labour.

The dialectic of property

The transformation of quantity into quality

In his account of property relations in *Capital* Marx draws heavily upon dialectical concepts. These concepts were familiar to him from the work of Hegel. But Marx cannot take them over as they are used by Hegel since these concepts are an integral part of Hegel's idealism. The care and success with which Marx employs the concepts must determine whether or not his claim to have made a rational and convincing use of Hegel's dialectic can be upheld.

In Chapter 10 of *Capital* on the 'rate and mass of surplus-value' Marx discusses the rise of the modern capitalist in unmistakeably Hegelian dialectical terms. Marx is at pains to point out that not every 'sum of money, or of value, is at pleasure transformable into capital'.³⁶ The would-be capitalist must, at the least, have sufficient money at his disposal to employ one labourer. In practice, of course, a great deal more money than this is required before the employer can stand back from the production process and act as the embodiment of capital. Small 'masters', who are themselves involved to a greater or less extent in production, form an intermediate stage between craftsmen, who worked side by side with their colleagues in medieval guilds, and the fully-fledged capitalist. In the medieval guild restrictions were placed on the number of hands a master craftsman could employ in order to prevent one craftsman gaining dominance within the guild. But in modern market society this limit is swept away and the individual capitalist emerges. Whereas the member of the medieval guild was strictly limited in the amount of money he could advance for future production the modern capitalist may advance for production sums which vastly exceed his personal wealth:

The possessor of money or commodities actually turns into a capitalist in such cases . . . where the maximum sum advanced for production greatly exceeds the maximum of the middle ages. Here, as in natural science, is shown the correctness of the law discovered by Hegel in his *Logic* that merely quantitative changes beyond a certain point pass into qualitative differences.³⁷

Engels also draws attention to this passage in *Anti-Dühring* where he defends Marx against an accusation made by Dühring – a

school teacher and sometime Dozent at the University of Berlin – that Marx applied Hegel's nonsensical dialectical method in a slavish fashion in *Capital*. Engels defends Marx more than adequately from this accusation by pointing out that Marx refers to Hegel's law of the transformation of quantity into quality only after having presented his case. There is, Engels thinks, no question of Marx imposing a Hegelian law upon the facts, rather Marx finds in Hegel's law confirmation of his own independently drawn conclusion.³⁸

In a footnote Marx refers to the development of molecular theory in chemistry in his time as providing more striking evidence of the correctness of Hegel's law and to reinforce the view that he does not take the law to be *a priori* true, but is rather one that can only progressively be confirmed by the facts. Engels, as might be expected, elaborates on this footnote in the third edition of *Capital* to show more graphically what Marx might mean.³⁹

Clearly Hegel's observation about the transformation of quantity into quality is of considerable value to Marx in presenting his argument. The idea that at certain points quantity merely changes into quality allows Marx to discuss in an illuminating way the variety of problems attendant upon trying to establish a capitalist enterprise. The quantitative changes necessary at the margin to make the qualitative leap vary greatly according to the time and place and, crucially, according to the level of technology. In an advanced country a new entrant to a branch of production may find the market so taken up by competitors that entry becomes impractical, unless it is at a scale that will drive a number of competitors out of business. Such obstacles might not stand in the way of a new producer in a less developed country, yet that country may be so poor, and the level of technology in the relevant branch of industry so high, that the quantitative barrier to entering the new area (a qualitative step) of capitalist industry is insuperable. Marx shows himself to be alive to such problems when he concludes that:

Certain spheres of production demand, even at the very outset of capitalist production, a minimum of capital that is not as yet found in the hands of single individuals. This gives rise partly to state subsidies to private persons . . . partly to the formation of societies with legal monopoly for the exploitation of certain branches of industry and commerce, the forerunners of our modern joint-stock companies.⁴⁰

We can conclude therefore that the Hegelian concept of the transformation of quantity into quality is used quite successfully by Marx to explain at what point capitalism takes off. What is interesting is that although Marx describes the transformation as a law the circumstances in which the generalization applies have always to be empirically determined. We cannot assume in advance that the rule that quantitative changes lead to qualitative changes always applies. Not content with this success Marx then goes on more adventurously to deal with the complex and often slippery concept of the 'negation of the negation'.

The negation of the negation

At its inception capitalism led to a society of small-scale producers. Both in manufacture and agriculture production centred on the individual. In agriculture the break-up of the large feudal estates brought into existence a mass of small peasant proprietors who owned sufficient land to maintain themselves and their dependants. The capitalist owner in manufacture emerged from the medieval guild system as a small-scale employer of skilled craftsmen. Workshops were not large so that relations between employer and employee were on a face to face basis. Side by side with the growth of the independent manufacturers, skilled craftsmen were able to break away from their original guilds to establish themselves independently, selling their wares and skills to the highest bidder on the open market. Each city, town and village boasted its skilled craftsmen who earned their living in this way. Proud of their independence these small proprietors played a significant role in the formation of the modern state. Indeed room exists even now in the contemporary industrial and corporate economy for individual self-employed people to make their way in the world as purveyors of a scarce product or trade. The historical starting point of capitalism is still for many the starting point to their own fortune.

However, in the earlier stages of commercial society all enterprises were single or small-scale. These enterprises inaugurated the capitalist system based upon private property. It is in this early stage of capitalist production that the classical theoretical defences of private property emerge. Locke's, Mandeville's, Smith's and Burke's arguments for private property rest on small-scale competitive capitalist production. They point to the

benefits which accrue to society from the individual's being in charge of his own affairs; from being able to call things one's own, and from retaining control of the product until it is completed and sold.

John Locke's property theory excellently portrays the dream of individual capitalist advancement. In his *Second Treatise of Government* Locke argues that it is a natural right that each individual should own that part of nature he subdues and fashions to his own ends. Locke presents what might justly be called a 'labour theory of property' which puts stress on the fact that it is the labour expended on a product which marks it off from the common property given to us by God in nature. Locke argues that capitalist property necessarily develops from our original common ownership of the earth through the pursuit of our individual needs. Water found in its natural condition quite rightly belongs to no one, but as soon as one individual has expended time and energy in laying hold of that water then it is his own. As Locke himself put it, 'though the water running in the fountain be everyone's, yet who can doubt but that in the pitcher is his only who drew it out?'.⁴¹

Locke appears to take the side of the small capitalist producer in demonstrating that it is through hard work and effort that the capitalist's wealth is acquired. To those who demand greater equality in the distribution of wealth followers of Locke and defenders of private property answer: apply yourselves with the same industry and vigour and you yourself can become rich. God, as Locke says, 'when he gave the world in common to all mankind, commanded man also to labour. . . . He that in obedience to that command of God, subdued, tilled and sowed any part of it, thereby annexed to it something that was his property which another has no title to, nor could without injury take from him'.⁴² The merit and moral appeal of this argument appears undeniable, particularly where capitalist agriculture and manufacture are beginning to get on their feet and opportunities for establishing new lines of production and of offering new skills abound. However, the great difficulties inherent in this argument were foreshadowed by Locke himself when he recognized that the introduction of money and money-capital into the economy makes it possible for an individual to acquire more wealth and land than he personally can possibly use. Money provides a

store of wealth which is not necessarily limited in duration or extent. Locke tries to overcome the difficulties that this development presents for his argument by suggesting that as each individual tacitly agrees to the introduction of money that the ensuing inequalities are also acceptable and justifiable.

Locke's claim that we tacitly agree to inequality through accepting and using money removes some of the sheen from his otherwise engaging defence of individualistic property rights.⁴³ With the introduction of money and the consequent accumulation of wealth not all prosperous owners are in the position to claim that their riches are the outcome of solely their own effort. The existence of money and, more particularly, money-capital both allows individuals to acquire more wealth than they can usefully employ and to transmit that wealth to their heirs. Significantly, Marx's account of accumulation in *Capital* follows a similar line to that of Locke in suggesting that large inequalities appear once money-capital is introduced, but goes further than Locke in suggesting that the development of capitalism itself undermines individual private property. The wealth of the few takes the place, in Marx's view, of the wealth of the many. In the place of individual private property comes the large-scale property of the joint-stock company. It is then that Marx goes on to suggest that socialist property relations based on the common ownership of the means of production, as a negation of capitalist property relations, represents the negation of the negation.

Marx deals with the question of the negation of the negation in the development of property relations in Chapter 32 of Volume 1 of *Capital* entitled the 'Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation'. This is perhaps one of the briefest, if most powerfully argued, chapters in the book. Marx appears partly to accept the Lockean view of the origins of capitalist private property when he says:

The private property of the worker (*Arbeiter*) in his means of production is the foundation of petty industry, whether agricultural, manufacturing or both; petty industry again, is an essential condition for the development of social production and of the free individuality of the worker himself.⁴⁴

But Marx notes that 'this mode of production presupposes parcelling of the soil, and scattering of the means of production',⁴⁵ corresponding to what Locke appears to regard as the early, ideal

stage of the acquisition of property. There is at this stage no doubt a great flowering of the talents of the skilled artisan and great ingenuity is shown on the part of the peasant proprietor in cultivating his soil, but this stage of development has as its great drawback the fact that 'it excludes cooperation, division of labour . . . and the productive application of the forces of nature by society'.⁴⁶

Individual producers indeed enjoy solely the fruits of their own labour, but the corollary of this is that no one enjoys the fruit of the collective labour of individuals. However idyllic this type of economy might be pictured to be, Marx, like Locke, thinks the arrangement to be inherently unstable. The accumulation of capital in the more successful enterprises gradually makes the small individual proprietor into an endangered species. The growth of the division of labour within enterprises and the economies of scale brought about through the concentration of production in one place lead to the products of the individual proprietor's being increasingly uncompetitive. Often these proprietors are driven out of business and made to join the ranks of either the manufacturing or agricultural working class. At a certain stage, Marx argues, the individualist mode of production 'brings forth the material agencies for its own dissolution'. The 'pigmy property of the many' is transformed into the 'huge property of the few'.⁴⁷

Marx depicts the path of capitalist accumulation as a harsh and brutal process which makes a mockery of the point of origin of capitalist property in self-earned private property. Peasants are physically driven from the land by the larger capitalist proprietors. In the haste to develop a more advanced and more profitable system of agriculture the rights of the existing proprietors are cruelly disregarded. The eighteenth-century Enclosure Acts represented the most shameful use of parliamentary power to expropriate part of the British people. In the cities and towns the independent craftsmen were treated no less shamefully in being driven out of business by their larger competitors through both fair means and foul. In Marx's view 'the expropriation of the immediate producers was accomplished with merciless vandalism and under the stimulus of passions the most infamous, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most meanly odious'.⁴⁸ In following this course though the larger proprietors

were no more than agents of economic forces which forcibly exercised their control over them. The capitalist enterprise is in a ruthless, dog eat dog situation. It has to drive out its competitors to survive. But the outcome on society of these unavoidable pressures is an extraordinary one:

The capitalist mode of appropriation, the result of the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property. This is the first negation of individual private property as founded upon the labour of the proprietor. But capitalist production with the necessity of a natural process begets its own negation. It is the negation of the negation.⁴⁹

This dialectic of property ownership provides one of the more contentious examples of Marx's use of Hegelian dialectical procedures. The analysis not only follows Hegel's precept of looking on reality or 'being' as becoming, but also Marx concludes with the apparently resounding Hegelian phrase 'the negation of the negation'. Marx brings out what Kahn in his commentary on Herclitus's fragments calls the positive aspect of the principle of negativity.⁵⁰ According to this view, the partiality of the human perspective means that there is always something that is of value and life-enhancing in what is generally regarded as negative and deleterious to human harmony. Fresh approaches can be discovered to the understanding of objects and events. This view comes out in various ways in Marx's analysis. It becomes apparent in the first instance in his view of the break-up of the original community of small proprietors. This damages the interests of the small proprietors, but Marx draws attention to the benefits which accrue to society from more efficient production within larger units. Marx then repeats this procedure with his analysis of the deficiencies of large-scale capitalist production. He points to what might be taken as positive in the centralization, concentration and increasing socialization that takes place within capitalist production.

But has Marx transported Hegelian dialectic into alien territory here? It may appear that he has prejudiced the objective nature of his enquiry into capitalist society by drawing into it misleading Hegelian labels and supposed laws.⁵¹ This issue cannot be resolved without looking, albeit briefly, at the role that Engels plays in the transmission of Marx's ideas about dialectic.

After Marx's death, in the essay the *Dialectics of Nature*, Engels

sought to formulate dialectics in terms of three indubitable laws which operated both in nature and in our thought. Because of the intimate intellectual relationship that Engels enjoyed with Marx these formulations have gained a great deal of authority both in Marxist and non-Marxist circles. The three laws were:

1. The law of the transformation of quantity into quality.
2. The law of the interpenetration of opposites.
3. The law of the negation of the negation.⁵²

Engels was anxious to give to Hegel the credit for first formulating these laws, although Engels felt that Hegel, because of his idealist preconceptions, was unable to see these laws in their true light. In Engels's view, Hegel's mistake 'lies in the fact that these laws are foisted on nature and history as laws of thought, and not deduced from them'.⁵³ But it is far from certain that this is Hegel's main mistake in his presentation of dialectics. Contrary to Engels's view, Hegel appears to be greatly concerned when he employs his dialectical method to show that it is no mere external apparatus of thought brought to the object from the outside but, rather, reflects the inner composition of the object. Hegel's error is, I would argue, that after completing his (often highly objective) dialectical account of a topic he identifies the reality of that topic solely with the dialectical account. Hegel takes too literally his claim that dialectic represents the 'innermost soul' of its object. However, in trying to correct Hegel Engels appears to commit a similar error, for instead of wishing our thought, encapsulated in dialectic, to represent all that is truly real Engels takes the object or what he calls 'matter in motion' to hold the secret to all knowledge.⁵⁴ For Engels the three laws of dialectics merely reflect this ultimate reality.

Engels provides a number of examples of the application of these laws. These examples are drawn more or less exclusively from natural science, reflecting Engels's bias towards traditional materialism. For Engels the law of the transformation of quantity into quality, this law 'of nature discovered by Hegel celebrates its most important triumph' in chemistry.⁵⁵ If, as Engels suggests, we look at the atomic composition of carbon compounds and the effect of quantitative changes in this composition the evidence appears quite convincing. Simple numerical changes in the numbers of carbon atoms and hydrogen atoms combined with one

another produce vastly different substances, ranging from the gas methane (CH_4) to the solid body hexadecane ($\text{C}_{16} \text{H}_{34}$). Equally the behaviour of magnets and the relationship of poles in the transmission of electricity appear to confirm the second law of the interpenetration of opposites. Engels draws on mathematics to confirm the validity of the third law of the negation of the negation. In algebra by multiplying two minus quantities e.g. $-a$ by $-a$, we obtain a positive quantity $+a^2$. Proof of the same law can be found, Engels thinks, in differential calculus where two quantities are made 'so infinitely small that in comparison with any real quantity, however, small, they disappear'.⁵⁶

Engels marshals impressive evidence then to confirm the dialectical laws he believes always and unfailingly to hold both in nature and thought. Thereby he became the author of the idea of a materialist dialectics. There is room to believe, however, that Marx approaches the 'laws of dialectics' in a more sceptical and open-ended way.⁵⁷ In his account of dialectics Engels appears to want to prime the individual in advance with an idea of the kind of behaviour to be expected and looked for in the objects being investigated. We are asked to look for patterns already established. In this Engels seems to fall behind Hegel who seems always to stress that in the application of the dialectical method the object should be approached without preconception so that it can be understood as it is. What Engels appears to overlook is the possibility that with the object under investigation none of the dialectical laws he cites may apply. Marx is, as Carver points out, much more circumspect.⁵⁸ In *Capital* Marx points to a number of instances in which Hegel's dialectical laws appear to apply but does not suggest that these laws inhere in things, and that we might in advance of the investigation expect them to apply. Marx turns to the dialectical method to expound those things he thinks to have discovered, not to make those discoveries in the first place. The distinction he makes between the mode of enquiry (*Forschungsweise*) and the mode of presentation (*Darstellungsweise*)⁵⁹ runs counter to Engels's view that dialectics prevail throughout nature and thought. At root, Engels makes the same mistake as Hegel in trying to see dialectic as an ontological principle that is somehow 'embedded' within reality.

Now, the standard translation of the passage on the 'negation of the negation' in property relations in Chapter 23 of *Capital*

reflects, I believe, Engels's rather than Marx's preconceptions about dialectics. The standard translation was prepared by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling under the supervision of Engels. This explains, I think, a number of differences in emphasis between the original German and English editions. Such a difference of emphasis is evident here since the translation authorized by Engels speaks of the negation of the negation (capitalism) occurring 'with the *inexorability* of a law of Nature'.⁶⁰ In this (standard) translation the path of capitalist development is portrayed as a teleological one, one that is pre-ordained by a non-human agency. But this is not I think, Marx's meaning. The original German is quite clear. Marx speaks of capitalism begetting its own negation 'with the necessity of a natural process'.⁶¹ Marx speaks in metaphorical terms of nature, in contrast Engels speaks in concrete terms of the working of a natural law. Also whereas Marx speaks of a natural 'process', Engels speaks misleadingly of a law. Thus, the translation authorized by Engels alters the weight of the meaning of the sentence which speaks of the *probability* of the breakdown of capitalism and its transformation into socialism, to the less accurate suggestion that the breakdown and transformation is *inevitable*.

Engels's approach to dialectics in the *Dialectics of Nature* and *Anti-Dühring* seems, on the whole, to be a particularly wooden one. He appears falsely to embrace the idea, which Hegel so trenchantly criticizes in his Introduction to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, of knowledge as an instrument with which to grasp 'the absolute'.⁶² In the formula of the negation of the negation Engels believes himself to have found one such instrument or key to comprehending the universe. As he puts it in *Anti-Dühring*:

And so, what is the negation of the negation? An extremely general – and for this reason extremely far-reaching and important – law of development of nature, history, and thought; a law which . . . holds good in the animal and plant kingdoms, in geology, in mathematics, in history and philosophy.⁶³

But this account of the negation of the negation has the unfortunate consequence of reducing the human world into the biological world. Unlike Marx, Engels is in no doubt that the operation of the law of the negation of the negation in the social world is as inexorable as the way in which night follows day.

But what stance does Marx take? I think Marx is searching for

terms with which to explain a process he thinks to be taking place in market economies. The Hegelian term the 'negation of the negation' springs to mind not as the creator of the process he observes but as a useful way of accounting for the facts and patterns he believes he has already discovered.⁶⁴ Marx seems not to move from the universal law of the negation of the negation to the particular instance, as Engels's interpretation of dialectics suggests, rather he appears to discover a particular instance which gives credence to Hegel's generalization. Also for Marx the process of the negation of the negation of capitalist society has to be achieved. The necessity for this change *asserts itself* like a natural process, but it appears far from being a natural process. For the change to be successfully undertaken requires 'the expropriation of a few usurpers by the mass of the people'.⁶⁵ The language Marx employs here is that of ethical necessity and not physical inevitability. Marx speaks in imperative mood of the 'centralization of the means of production and the socialization of work' reaching 'a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist shell. This shell is [*wird*] burst. The hour of capitalist private property strikes. The expropriators are expropriated'.⁶⁶ But this expropriation can occur only through its being willed by the vast majority. The emancipation of the working class has to be the task of the members of the working class themselves. Should they remain unconvinced of the practicality of this aim the majority may well remain in the negative condition of capitalist exploitation.

Whatever the future holds the evidence of the past appears to confirm, in Marx's view, the value of many dialectical rules and generalizations. Although we cannot say with confidence the world is developing dialectically we can say with confidence that if we look on the world dialectically we see it in a more interesting and informative light. The social and natural world appears to be in a continual process of change or becoming. This change occurs not through a harmonious process of linear development, but occurs seemingly through conflicts and clashes among opposing forces. Complete agreement and complete conformity may well imply stagnation and decline. The clash of opposing views and forces in human society provides the impetus for development. The main motor of this development is the seemingly negative.

What undermines existing society is often also what points it on in a new direction. Of course, not all negative forces in society are of a potentially healthy nature. Some appear to point to a marked decline and an apparently lower standard of civilization. The encouragement of the seemingly negative forces in society may not then inevitably imply the encouragement of what is implicitly barbarous and bestial. What Marx tries to bring out with his dialectics is the positive forces which lie within the negative. What we judge to be genuinely retrograde within society should be rejected. But in rejecting what appears retrograde that which may be valuable and life-enhancing should be encouraged. So for Marx the employment of dialectic in comprehending society most likely involves a moral choice. Following this view dialectic is no mere tool with which to unveil the secrets of the world and to confuse and dazzle in the manner of some of the ancient sophists and sceptics. The use of dialectic as Marx understands the term implies exercising a judgement as to where the path of progress lies. Knowing that the most valuable interpretation is not to be found in simply looking on at the world, Marx in his dialectic seeks to establish an object which may be commensurate with an ideal of human achievement. Arguably, this is the role the concept of a communist society plays. The goal of free individuals democratically combining together to produce according to a common plan represents the standpoint from which the truth about the world is evaluated. Although this goal might not be easily achieved, working towards it may help to put the present in perspective.

Notes

1. *Science of Logic*, p. 439; *Werke* 6, p. 74.
2. *Science of Logic*, p. 439; *Werke* 6, p. 75.
3. See F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1969, pp. 144–5: 'True, so long as we consider things as at rest and lifeless, each one by itself, along side and after each other we do not run up against any contradictions in them. . . . Here, therefore, we have a contradiction which is "objectively present in things and processes themselves" '. Cf. V.I. Lenin *Collected Works*, 38, pp. 221–2.
4. *Science of Logic*, p. 442; *Werke* 6, p. 79.
5. *Science of Logic*, p. 442; *Werke* 6, p. 79. Cf. *Encyclopaedia I* (Hegel's *Lesser Logic*), tr. W. Wallace, Oxford, 1975, p. 174; *Werke* 8, p. 247:

'Contradiction is the very moving principle of the world: and it is ridiculous to say that contradiction is unthinkable. The only thing correct in that statement is that contradiction is not the end of the matter, but cancels itself'.

6. *Science of Logic*, p. 443; *Werke* 6, pp. 79–80.
7. *Capital*, pp. 103–4; *Das Kapital*, pp. 118–19.
8. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 38, p. 178.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
10. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, tr. B. Brewster, New Left Books, London, 1971, pp. 27–67.
11. See in particular Lenin's lists of the sixteen elements of dialectics (*Collected Works*, 38, pp. 221–3), and his conclusion that 'dialectics can be defined as the doctrine of the unity of opposites'. All this is highly informative, although it overlooks the points that neither Hegel nor Marx would try to list the properties of dialectics nor *define* it. Dialectical method can be described or, best of all, illustrated but to try to fix it as an object through classifying its characteristics reduces it to precisely that kind of abstract understanding it was designed to transcend.
12. *Capital*, p. 106; *Das Kapital*, p. 121.
13. *Capital*, p. 107; *Das Kapital*, p. 122.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Capital*, p. 104; *Das Kapital*, p. 118.
16. *Capital*, p. 105; *Das Kapital*, p. 118. Cf. *Grundrisse*, p. 213; *Grundrisse der Kritik*, p. 127, where Marx speaks of 'the contradictory functions of money'.
17. *Capital*, p. 113; *Das Kapital*, p. 127. Cf. Howard, M. C. and King, J. E., *The Political Economy of Marx*, Longmans, London 1985, p. 208: 'A proposition frequently used to justify an equilibrium methodology is Say's Law which maintains that "supply creates its own demand". This implies that there can be no general glut of commodities'.
18. J. M. Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment*, Macmillan, London, 1967, p. 28.
19. *Capital*, p. 114; *Das Kapital*, p. 128.
20. J. M. Keynes, *General Theory*, p. 28.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
23. *Capital*, Vol. 2, p. 394; *Das Kapital*, II: 'Adam Smith opposes the necessary conclusion of his resolution of the value of commodities, and therefore also of the value of social annual product into wages and surplus-value and therefore into mere revenue – the conclusion that in this event the entire annual produce might be consumed. It is never the original thinkers that draw the absurd conclusion. They leave that to the Says and MacCullochs.'
24. 'Storch, for example, remarked quite correctly against Say that a great part of consumption is not consumption for immediate use, but consumption in the production process, e.g., consumption of

machines, coal, oil, required buildings etc. This consumption is in no way identical with that at issue here.' *Grundrisse*, p. 413; *Grundrisse der Kritik*, p. 316.

25. *Capital*, Vol. 2, p. 399; *Das Kapital* II, p. 394.
26. *Capital*, Vol. 2, p. 440; *Das Kapital* II, p. 434. For a discussion and critical assessment of Marx's treatment of Say's Law see M. M. Howard and J. E. King, *The Political Economy of Marx*, pp. 110-13 and pp. 209-13.
27. *Capital*, p. 632; *Das Kapital*, p. 661.
28. *Grundrisse*, Introduction, p. 101; *Grundrisse der Kritik*, p. 22.
29. Cf. G. R. G. Mure, *A Study of Hegel's Logic*, Oxford, 1950, pp. 294-310.
30. *Capital*, ch. XV, pp. 271-507; *Das Kapital*, ch. XV, pp. 391-530.
31. *Science of Logic*, p. 824; *Werke* 6, p. 549.
32. *Capital*, p. 146; *Das Kapital*, p. 161.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Capital*, pp. 165-6; *Das Kapital*, p. 181: 'It is therefore impossible for capital to be produced by circulation, and it is equally impossible for it to originate apart from circulation. It must have its origin both in circulation and yet not in circulation.'
36. *Capital*, pp. 307-8; *Das Kapital*, p. 326.
37. *Capital*, p. 309; *Das Kapital*, p. 327.
38. F. Engels *Anti-Dühring: Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, p. 150.
39. To Marx's brief comment: 'The molecular theory of modern chemistry first scientifically worked out by Laurent and Gerhart rests on no other law' (i.e. the law of the transformation of quantity to quality) Engels adds: 'the author speaks here of the homologous series of carbon compounds, first so named by C. Gerhart in 1843, each series of which has its own general algebraic formula'. Engels then goes on to give a number of examples of these carbon compounds. *Capital*, p. 309; *Das Kapital*, p. 327.
40. *Capital*, p. 309; *Das Kapital*, pp. 327-8.
41. J. Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Dent, London, 1977, Book II, ch. V, p. 131.
42. J. Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Dent, Book II, ch. V, p. 132.
43. Cf. Alan Ryan, *Property and Political Theory*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1984, p. 40: 'To the landless labourer this is mere mockery. If he had land enough to subsist on, he could opt out perhaps, but if he is born into the world without access to the land which would keep him alive, he has no choice but to sell his labour to whoever will employ him'.

Also C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, Oxford, 1962, pp. 203-4: 'Wherever money has been introduced there ceases to be unappropriated land. The introduction of money by tacit consent has removed the previous natural limitations of rightful appropriation, and in so doing has invalidated the natural

provision that everyone should have as much as he could make use of. Locke then proceeds to show in more detail how the introduction of money removes the limitation inherent in his initial justification of individual appropriation'.

44. *Capital*, p. 761; *Das Kapital*, p. 789.

45. *Ibid*

46. *Capital*, p. 762; *Das Kapital*, pp. 789–90.

47. *Ibid*

48. *Ibid*.

49. *Capital*, p. 763; *Das Kapital*, p. 791.

50. See Chapter 1, and also C. H. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, p. 189.

51. 'The same Hegelian influence comes to light in the imprudent formulation in Chapter 23 of Volume 1, Part VIII, where Marx, discussing the "expropriation of the expropriators", declares. "It is the negation of the negation". Imprudent, since its ravages have not yet come to an end, despite the fact that Stalin was right, for once, to suppress "the negation of the negation" from the laws of dialectic, it must be said to the advantage of other, even more serious errors'. Louis Althusser, 'Preface to *Capital*', *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, p. 91. Althusser takes the view that Hegel's influence on the writing of *Capital* as a whole, was a baleful one, so that we ought 'to rewrite Part I' of the book. (*Ibid*.)

52. *Dialectics of Nature*, tr. from the German by C. Dutt, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 62.

53. *Ibid*., p. 62.

54. 'Dialectics . . . is nothing more than the science of the general laws of motion and development of nature, human society and thought.' *Anti-Duhring*, p. 109.

55. *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 65.

56. *Ibid*., p. 164.

57. With Jon Elster I find 'it hard to believe that Marx would have come to accept the laws of dialectics had he put his mind to them'. Marx 'was invariably critical of all attempts from Proudhon to Lassalle, to employ the Hegelian mode of reasoning in a mechanical way . . . Yet Engels's attempt to formulate laws of dialectics is precisely that – the subsumption of miscellaneous cases under general principles.' *Making Sense of Marx*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 42–3.

58. *Marx and Engels: the Intellectual Relationship*, Harvester, Brighton 1983, pp. 136–7: Since Engels's model of science was inductive (the 'facts' provide the 'view'), causal and law-directed, his projection of these suppositions onto Marx's work, has caused difficulties . . . Neither Marx's correspondence nor the comments on the social and natural sciences in his works support the 'scientific' *Weltanschauung* propounded by Engels after Marx's death and elaborated in Engels's posthumously published manuscripts. . . . What Marx actually said about social science and natural science . . . does not bear at all on

Engels's grandiose claims about matter in motion and dialectical laws'.

59. See above ch. 6, pp. 146–9.

60. *Capital*, p. 763.

61. *Das Kapital*, p. 791.

62. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 46–7; *Werke* 3, p. 68–9: 'For, if cognition is the instrument for getting hold of absolute being, it is obvious that the use of an instrument on a thing certainly does not let it be what it is for itself, but sets out to reshape and alter it'. However, 'if we remove from a reshaped thing what the instrument has done to it, then the thing – here the Absolute – becomes for us exactly what it was before this superfluous effort'.

63. *Anti-Duhring*, p. 168.

64. As Elster puts it: 'To refer to a process as an instance of the negation of the negation, then, is only to draw attention to the fact that it can be interestingly described in a characterization with these features. It is emphatically not to suggest that there exists a specifically dialectical form of negation that, unlike the standard logical negation, does not cancel when iterated.' *Making Sense of Marx*, p. 41.

65. *Capital*, p. 764; *Das Kapital*, p. 791.

66. *Capital*, p. 763; *Das Kapital*, pp. 790–1.

9

Conclusion

Adorno's negative dialectic

I have attempted in this book to outline positively the main features of Hegel's and Marx's dialectical method. This runs counter to the thesis of Theodor Adorno in his celebrated *Negative Dialectics* who argues that a genuinely dialectical method cannot be spelled out in a straightforward narrative form. To establish the identity of the dialectical method through such a narrative would, in his view, render the method impotent. What, at best, can be done to present the method is to identify some of the underlying concepts which are important in its use and then to advance a number of models in which these concepts are employed. According to Adorno, dialecticians may legitimately aspire to teach by example, but in trying to do more they risk the method being turned into a dogma. Above all, Adorno believes those who employ dialectic should attempt to avoid the platitudes and simplifications of the Marxism of the Stalinist era.

The key principle of dialectical thinking for Adorno is the principle of non-identity. By this principle Adorno means 'that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder.'¹ With this principle Adorno appears to be attacking both the philosophical basis of Hegel's dialectic and the dogmas of dialectical materialism. Common to both these approaches appears to be the assumption that in dialectic we have an exhaustive explanation of human experience. The dogmatist assumes that dialectic sums up all that can be rationally said of the world. Adorno takes such an approach to be antagonistic to a truly dialectical mode of procedure since for him the main impetus behind such a procedure is the recognition that our thinking can

never fully encapsulate its object. It is the inherent incompleteness of our intellectual attempts to capture the essence of our experience which provides the continual stimulus for dialectical enquiry.

Insisting on this principle of non-identity is not, however, a straightforward task since 'the appearance of identity is inherent in thought itself.' 'To think is,' as Adorno says, 'to identify'.² The way out of this dilemma for those who want to think and write dialectically is to refrain from fully establishing the identity of objects. To attempt to encapsulate in full the nature of an object is, for Adorno, to undermine the dialectical process of thought. In place of such a positive philosophy of identification Adorno proposes negative dialectics. Negative dialectics he sees as a metaphilosophy which is parasitic on ordinary, non-dialectical thought. The metaphilosophy points out the contradictions of ordinary thinking and hints at more enlightening ways of conceptualizing our experience.

But persuasive as Adorno's criticisms of idealism and dialectical materialism are, his metaphilosophy in which he refuses to identify dialectic with anything in particular leaves us with nothing solid to grasp. Apparently, the conclusion we can draw from this is that without Adorno's own complex, aphoristic speculation there cannot, it seems, be a negative dialectic. When we set to one side Adorno's ornate style what is most striking about his critique of identity thinking is the sense of scepticism and aloofness which it imparts. Withdrawal from the world appears to be Adorno's answer to the dilemmas of modern life. He takes too far his thesis of non-identity when he refuses to be clear about what he is doing. If dialectic is a riddle then it cannot be recommended to anyone as a form of thought. Adorno harks back to the suggestive, enigmatic dialectic of Heraclitus rather than moving forward to the more systematic dialectic of Hegel and Marx. I think it is worth the effort to go beyond Adorno. To show that there is something solid to grasp I have outlined and criticized Hegel's metaphilosophy of dialectic and tried to derive from various examples of Marx's analysis of capitalist society an account of his dialectical method. But I have not entirely rejected Adorno's conclusions. I agree with Adorno and Sartre's view (expressed in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*) that existence is primary and that our way of comprehending the world should

not be identified with the world.³ As Adorno puts it, concepts do not fully contain their objects. I accept also Adorno's view that dialectic is a form of metaphilosophy which is parasitic upon ordinary thought. The best starting point for our attempts to comprehend the world is the given of ordinary experience and thought. Existence though has its own peculiar form. We cannot start simply with objects, sensations or theories since what is first given to us is given to us also in our language and its received ideas. Our existence is usually already structured by thought. But this ordinary thought operates with categories and concepts which are not brought into a fully systematic relation with each other. What the analyst attempts to do with the dialectical method is to bring these categories and concepts into a coherent form.

If dialectic is a metaphilosophy it appears to follow that it cannot be something which is inherent in things. By definition it would appear that a metaphilosophy is not directly of the world. Things (i.e., external objects in the world) provide an impetus to this metaphilosophy but they never wholly provide its substance. In attempting to comprehend the world with the help of this metaphilosophy we come to know it only as the knowledge of 'things' as they affect the human senses and mind and as they are, in turn, shaped by human activity and purposes. (To speak of a knowledge of things not brought to our attention in this way is, I feel, to speak of a non-imaginable world). In Marx's dialectical method this subjective element pertaining to all knowledge is taken into account, but he appears to regard it not as indicating the limited nature of human knowledge but as testifying to its possible authenticity. Our knowledge of the world is always that of practically active human beings. But this is a knowledge of something which when initially encountered always lies beyond the wit and intelligence of the individual human being. Our thought is inevitably incommensurate with the reality it seeks to take in. We form our knowledge from our experience of things, not from those things in themselves. In recognizing that dialectic operates only at a metaphilosophical level we take it for granted that things may have an unpredictable logic of their own. Dialectical method does not provide a privileged intuition into the nature of the world. On the contrary, the dialectic method when employed most usefully affords an understanding of the world which captures its essence only at one particular historical junc-

ture. The dialectical method feeds off what we experience of the world, it does not control that experience.

In this respect I agree with Adorno. However, his *Negative Dialectics* tries to avoid, rather than deal with, a difficulty which besets any attempt to outline the dialectical method. This difficulty is summed up in Spinoza's famous dictum 'all determination is negation'. Interestingly, this phrase is referred to in Volume 1 of Marx's *Capital* where he criticizes the vulgar economists who try to explain profit as a return for the abstinence of the capitalist.⁴ These vulgar economists fail to see that any activity can from one point of view be regarded as abstinence whilst from another being seen as enjoyment. The abstinence of the capitalist in not deciding to spend his income is no doubt compensated for by the enjoyment received through maintaining and expanding the business through further investment. Doing anything has both a positive and negative significance. The risk that Adorno thinks is run by spelling out the dialectical method is similar in that it may, he fears, by exposing both its strengths and weaknesses, appear simply to be one philosophical method just like any other. In this respect Adorno appears to share Hegel's view that dialectic represents the only appropriate method of enquiry. But to try to shield dialectical method from critical examination in refusing to stipulate what it is, does nothing to advance the claim that the method may often be the most appropriate one. The truth of Hegel's claim about dialectic has to be tested by an examination not only of examples of the method's use in practice but also through an analysis of the bare bones of the method itself. When this is done it becomes apparent, as Marx recognizes, that the dialectical method is not the one solely satisfactory method of enquiry in science or the humanities. Knowledge can be gained in a vast variety of ways: through observation, classification, experiment, play, repetition, and making mistakes; procedures which owe nothing to the dialectical method. Where the dialectical method does offer a unique contribution to our gaining understanding is possibly in the systematic presentation of the results of an enquiry. Its suggested rules, such as the unity of opposites, the true is the whole and difference within identity, provide us with the means with which to make sense of the most complex and confusing information given to us by our experience and understanding.

The philosophical status of Marx's *Capital*

Marx's *Capital* – where he most markedly employs dialectical method – is a deeply philosophical work. This may seem odd given Marx's apparent antipathy to philosophy. However, when Marx criticizes the philosophers in his 'Theses on Feuerbach' for having interpreted the world only I think he does not mean to imply with this that all philosophy is misleading. Philosophy does indeed contain truth, but because of its primarily contemplative nature what it has to say is often presented in a confusing and incomplete form. This might be a view legitimately expressed of Hegel's philosophy. Marx is dismissive, for example, of the ontological claims of Hegel's idealism. Marx rejects the reduction of being to thought in the *Science of Logic*, just as he rejects the attempt to reduce being to matter in certain kinds of materialist philosophy. However, Marx praises the active side of Hegel's idealism. It is this active side which, in Marx's view, redeems Hegel's philosophy. Marx would also join with Kant in criticizing traditional metaphysics for suggesting that being corresponds with reason, but he would not follow Kant in demanding that reason give up the attempt to comprehend the given objectively. To comprehend the given objectively we have to become involved with the world. The given is what provides the stimulus to our thought and remains its context. Marx's *Capital* represents his attempt to comprehend this given reality through reason. *Capital* depicts a human, social reality predominantly governed by economic forces. This corresponds with Marx's view that there can be no *being* which is not at the same time a human, social form of being. From his perspective phrases such as 'being in itself' or 'being as such' convey little or no meaning to those who hear their use, since there is no form of being on which we can report which can dispense with the practically interested human standpoint.

Nevertheless the projects of metaphysics and traditional epistemology are not, Marx thinks, wholly misguided. He thinks metaphysicians right in trying to grasp reality as a whole, but incorrect in their approach and presuppositions. Similarly he sees their efforts in the field of epistemology in trying to identify what is or is not reliable knowledge to be valuable. His own early deliberations in the 'Theses on Feuerbach' on the nature of

knowledge arise from his critical reception of the 'problem of knowledge' which appears to dominate modern philosophy from Descartes to Kant. But where classical epistemology (as taught by Descartes and Kant) seemingly falls down for Marx is in the way in which the subject and object of knowledge (or the thinker and the thing thought) are grasped. The perspective which apparently dominates in Cartesian philosophy is one of a subject wholly external to the object and one of an object wholly other to the subject. On one view, Marx's *Capital* represents an attempt to comprehend the human subject and external object in an authentic way. Seemingly for Marx the human subject has always to be an active, practical being and the object thought, in contrast, falls within a nature constantly being shaped and re-shaped by the human species.

So from a philosophical point of view Marx's *Capital* can plausibly be described as a social ontology, namely, a theory of being which is a theory of our social being. This phrase is used by Carol Gould in her excellent book *Marx's Social Ontology*.⁵ The phrase derives most probably, as does so much in this field, from the work of the Hungarian philosopher Georg Lukacs. Lukacs also sees Marx as deeply interested in philosophy and in a paradoxical way carrying on the tradition. The critic of such a standpoint might naturally protest that *Capital* has little or nothing to do with philosophy, since it might reasonably be said that the work is a fairly orthodox piece of classical political economy, resting as it does on Adam Smith's and David Ricardo's theory of value. However, this criticism arguably follows too closely currently accepted boundaries in the intellectual division of labour. Because economics, philosophy and sociology exist for the most part as separate departments within modern universities and colleges it is often convenient to assume that the subject under consideration divides itself up in such convenient ways. In support of this view we can say there are probably issues which have to them greater social or philosophical dimensions than they have economic dimensions. But points of emphasis such as this ought not to lead us to overlook the interconnected nature of the totality we study. The subjects we study in the social and human sciences are not first and foremost subjects of study. As independent entities they have a life of their own which transcends the accepted intellectual division of labour. This

important insight appears to lie behind Marx's approach in *Capital*. Things, Marx seems to suggest, do not appear before us in a neutral, simply object-like form, they appear before us for the most part as commodities – objects which embody exchange-value – which belong to one or other individual, group, or institution.

Because objects first appear before us as objects of need within an institutionally recognized form this does not imply that objective, scientific knowledge of the world is wholly impossible. Indeed Marx controversially sees *Capital* as a contribution to scientific knowledge. But what Marx appears to deny is the possibility of there existing an object of science which lies outside our needs dominated relationship with other human individuals and nature. Marx appears to see scientific knowledge as arising within this needs relationship. A clear, objective knowledge of nature becomes helpful, not for merely academic purposes, but in order to harness the forces of nature for human ends. Our comprehension of nature is, for Marx, part of our active relationship to it. In understanding nature in a scientific way we seem to abstract from our immediate needs and interests but we cannot abstract from our total interest dependent relationship to nature. Taken as a whole natural science is the application of our knowledge to the transformation of nature. Our knowledge of nature expands in the context of our pressing requirement to survive as a species. All science and human knowledge is unified in this respect.⁶ As Kant suggests, our knowledge forms a totality only from within the human practical perspective.

This explains why Marx in addressing economic issues in *Capital* may also be regarded as addressing philosophical issues. We have been able to turn to *Capital* here to provide an informative and useful account of Marx's dialectic. In looking at economic concerns we are, from a Marxian perspective, looking at the relationship of the human species to nature and the manner in which this relationship is socially dealt with. For Marx philosophy must fall within the perspective of everyday life as well. The questions with which philosophy deals, such as the nature of truth, the nature of the good life and the nature of judgement have to be tackled within this context.

'The true is the whole'

We come now to the question of the positive contribution that Hegel and Marx make with their dialectical method. Clearly I cannot provide an exhaustive answer. Here I intend only to summarize one or two respects in which Hegel and Marx provide methodological rules which may be useful to us. The first respect in which I think the method may be useful is in its recommendation of a holist approach. This is a tricky recommendation given the fluidity of the dialectical approach. I take it for granted that Karl Popper is right in suggesting that Hegel and Marx are holists, but I think he is mistaken in his assessment of the worth of the approach.⁸ Despite Popper's strictures, it may well be the case that looking at an object in the context of the totality of its relations does have a great deal to commend it. Popper rejects holism on the plausible Humean grounds that 'it is not possible for us to observe or to describe a whole piece of the world, or a whole piece of nature; in fact, not even the smallest whole piece may be so described, since all description is necessarily selective.'⁹ Like Kant, Popper thinks we should not confuse the demands of our subjective human reason with the nature of the reality we are attempting to describe. For Popper the complexities surrounding each individual thing or event are infinite, therefore any approach we take to understanding a thing must be particularistic. We have both positively to select and negatively to ignore. But the particular cannot, I feel, be approached or interpreted without the general. For instance, we can only fully understand the singularity or uniqueness of a given earthquake by knowing how it compares with earthquakes in general. That we cannot grasp a totality in every one of its minutest details (i.e., we do not know everything about every earthquake there ever has been) does not imply that there are no generalizations that can valuably be made. We can only begin to take in the world by making such generalizations. It should be borne in mind that all categories, even that of the 'earthquake', are necessarily generalizations and that we would not be in a position to report anything significant about the world unless we were prepared to go beyond the particular to the whole.

Thus, the particular and the whole are probably best seen as interrelated. In analysing experience we move, it seems, from the particular to the whole and from the whole to the particular, making greater and greater generalizations as we proceed. What is interesting about experience is, indeed, its particularity but the particular only becomes evident within the context of the whole.¹⁰ Hegel and Marx take the view that our experience is a totality. However, they differ in their view of this organizing totality. For Hegel the organizing totality is *Geist* or spirit. Whatever enters our experience has on it, Hegel thinks, the mark of a supreme form of intellectuality. At first glance when we are confronted by physical objects, this may not seem to be the case. But the task of philosophy is, in Hegel's view, to show all such apparent external experience is in the end through and through mind or spirit. Marx declines to accept Hegel's notion of spirit as an organizing totality on the grounds of its idealism. In Marx's view, ideas are the product of the human mind, and although they can help portray the way in which the external world is structured, they cannot be taken to be its sole organizing principle. Marx treats nature as a given which has its own organizing structure. This structure is not established by thought, although it can be reported upon in an illuminating way by scientific thought. Nature is not for Marx subsumed by spirit as it is for the idealist philosopher. This means that Marx has to propose a different notion of the organizing totality which gives shape to our experience. This organizing totality is to be found, he thinks, in man's relationship to nature. In general, this relationship is one of need. In modern society that relationship is formed and shaped by the movements of capital.

Marx accepts the methodological suggestion that the 'true is the whole'. But the 'whole' which he takes as shaping our experience is not spirit but human productive experience under the sway of capital. In the modern world capital is the social relation which appears to Marx to dominate all others. It is a social relation which may even take precedence over the self in the formation of our world. For Marx the human relation to capital performs the role which the notion of the unity of apperception performs for Kant in his critical system. It is a notion which draws together our experience in a manner which can make sense of it. The leading mode of production is the capitalist mode. Nature is

appropriated in a capitalist fashion. The production process gets under way only with the adequate provision of investment capital; the process of distributing society's product takes place only when sufficient commercial capital is available to create retailing outlets and provide stocks; and the goods are only consumed when people have available to them sufficient of the circulating medium of capital (money) to buy them. In seeing our experience in the context of capital Marx does not regard himself as bringing an extraneous factor to bear on an unrelated phenomenon. Family relations, cultural phenomena, scientific investigation, political activity – all such seemingly independent spheres – fall, he thinks, within the framework of capitalist production. No doubt Marx would wish to put out of his mind economic issues in discussing activity within other spheres. He simply finds that the economy always intrudes. Put in his own terms: before people can paint, act, draw, write poetry, sing, play and reproduce they must first of all eat and drink.

Marx accepts the notion that the true is the whole as a methodological supposition but, in keeping with his reception of Hegel's dialectic, he does not accept it as an ontological principle which applies to reality independently of all human observation and intervention. It is not an absolutely necessary fact that capital dominate our experience. For Hegel spirit underlies being so that he can draw the conclusion that all being is spirit. For Marx being is always the being of a human, social being so that it is always an open question whether or not the present organizing totality remains so. Capitalism is a product of history and human interaction. It is not in the nature of being *per se* and that of the human, social being that it should be capitalist. Indeed, Marx has nothing to say of being *per se*. So at a metaphilosophical and ethical level he refuses to accept the validity of the capitalist organisation of society. Our being is always subject to amendment and change by the individual and the social classes to which individuals belong. Hegel does not follow this line of argument. For Hegel there is no question of doubting the ethical validity of the whole. The whole is spirit. This is an abstract, ubiquitous entity which lies beyond nature and everyday life. We might similarly say that capital (in the form of financial capital) has its supra-individual abstract side to it but it has, in the end, to be recognized as what it is: a definite form of the social organization of production.

What also follows from the acceptance of the methodological rule that the true is the whole is that knowledge can best be expressed in the form of a system. Although an individual assertion, statement, proposition or judgement can make sense, genuinely informative thinking is too complex to be conveyed in such an atomistic form. An assertion or judgement can at best only summarize what is the case. There is always more to be said than can be included in one such judgement or proposition. This is why Hegel in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* expresses his unease with the notion of the propositional form as the best method of presenting knowledge. The correctness of any proposition rests, he thinks, on its exclusion of its dialectical opposite. Its validity therefore depends on the invalid nature of a contrary proposition which might well under other circumstances hold true. Considering this possibility brings into play other propositions which may also be valid or invalid, depending on whether the initial proposition holds or does not hold. Thus, a proposition can only be held to be valid in combination with other propositions. No such proposition stands alone. To illuminate more is required. This is why Hegel turns to the system. What forms a system is a combination of valid, interrelated propositions.¹¹ These provide one interpretive picture of experience. It is systems of this kind that Hegel and Marx put forward, the former in his philosophy of objective idealism, and the latter in his critique of capitalist society.

The notion of an intellectual system may be understood in two senses. It may be understood in the loose sense of a series of interconnected ideas put up for consideration, and in the more comprehensive sense of a watertight, irrefutable set of ideas. My feeling is that Hegel and Marx would benefit most from applying system in the first sense to their writings. Unfortunately, both were drawn to the notion of system in the second sense. Hegel tends to see the *Science of Logic* as an exhaustive account of philosophy. Marx equally is tempted to regard his account of capitalism as an all-inclusive scientific view of modern society. My view is that such a total insight into our condition is rarely likely to be given to us. In the light of this I have found it more helpful to see Hegel's and Marx's systems as partially and not completely illuminating our experience. A system of ideas is to be preferred to the proposition as a form of knowledge but no system can convey everything.

Essence and appearance

A second aspect of Hegel's dialectical method which Marx accepts and makes use of is the distinction between essence and appearance. I suggest this represents a valuable methodological rule. What is uniquely dialectical about the distinction between appearance and essence Hegel and Marx make is that both see essence as inhering in appearance.¹² Like most modern philosophers Hegel and Marx take the view that the world initially confronts us as appearance. Following Kant they hold that appearance, although it has roots in what we perceive with our senses, is none the less also conceptually structured. We account for something's appearance by using judgements such as 'commodities are bought and sold at their market price' and such accounts are corrected, refuted, or amended by weighing up further judgements such as 'gold has no natural price' or 'the price of wheat varies wildly.' In employing such judgements we are able to allot what we perceive into appropriate categories in order to convey something's outward form.

But appearance, as well as letting us know what is the case, may also mislead. The misleading aspect of appearance comes to light when the various judgements which compose an appearance are brought into conflict with one another. Kant's response in his transcendental dialectic to such conflicts in appearance is to suggest that they are natural and arise from reason itself. In saying this Kant distinguishes between what he calls ordinary illusion (*Schein*) and transcendental illusion.¹³ Ordinary illusion occurs when owing to the nature of our sensory faculties we perceive an object in an inverted form, e.g., as when the sun seems to drop below the horizon, or when we perceive a spoon partially placed in water as bent. Here there is an underlying state of affairs which give rise to the misleading appearance. However with transcendental illusion Kant argues there is no underlying state of affairs. Here it is simply a case of our reason projecting on to the everyday world and the world of scientific experience its own subjective demands. Reason tries to discover a totality underlying our experience for which we can never find fully convincing scientific testimony. For Kant we can know only what appears to our senses. But Hegel and Marx reject his dualistic epistemology and suggest that there is an essence which

underlies appearance. This essence is to be discovered not through transcendent speculation but by regarding appearance as appearance. The schemata and categories with which we make sense of our experience also, according to Hegel and Marx, unfold its essence. The scientific laws which we construct with the categories unveil to us a world (which is as Kant thinks) partially put there by our understanding but also a world which subsists in its own right in nature and human history.¹⁴

For Hegel appearance dissolves itself, whereas with Marx appearance and existence remain in being even when they are shown to be scientifically misleading. Marx thinks the appearance of capitalist society is particularly misleading. It is a society in which each appears to enjoy freedom, equality, security and the possibility of property. On the one hand, each individual has the opportunity to sell his or her ability to work to the highest bidder and no one is forced to undertake any activity against their will. Yet, on the other hand, capitalist society appears to be one of great dependence where great inequalities of income and wealth persist. Work is despised by the majority of the population and their conditions of work appear as coercive to them as they did to serfs in the middle ages. Capitalism opens up vast opportunities to all, but appears also to afford success only to the select few. These conflicts in the appearance of capitalist society greatly exercised Marx, and one of his main hopes in *Capital* is to explain these conflicts. To do so he has to assume that there is a reality underlying the appearance – an essence – which can be discovered and explained.

The difficulty with suggesting that an essence underlies appearance is that this is often taken to have the implication that this conceptual essence is a power in its own right. The concept of essence is made into an object (reified) and taken to have some kind of mystical quality which generates the appearance. This is how Hegel tends to see essence. For Hegel 'essence is being that has been sublated (*aufgehoben*) in and for itself'.¹⁵ Essence has a life of its own. This is not, I think, so with Marx. Marx seems not to regard the essence which underlies the appearance of capitalist society as a 'sublated' or dissolved form of being. With Marx the underlying reality is not reduced to its concept. The movements of capital which give rise to the misleading appearances of everyday life are existent forms, just as are the misleading

appearances. For instance, the competition which gives rise to the concentration and centralization of capital is no mere concept. It is experienced as a force which threatens the existence of each individual capitalist and worker. Under pain of extinction all capitalists try to increase the size of their companies. Appearance and essence are two levels at which the capitalist system in fact operates. The essence reflects its underlying dynamic and the appearance corresponds with its particular effects at any one time. The appearance would, for instance, be the closure of a local manufacturing company whereas the essence would be the concentration and centralization which affects all companies in that sphere of manufacture.

The unity of opposites

Lenin suggests that the main principles of Marx's dialectical method might be summed up in the one phrase 'the unity of opposites'.¹⁶ Although Marx does not conspicuously employ the phrase there is something to be said for Lenin's suggestion since Marx carries out a number of analyses which appear to exemplify the view. Pairs of opposites such as: proletariat and bourgeoisie; money and commodity; socialism and capitalism; classical political economy and vulgar political economy; capital and wage labour; freedom and necessity play a striking part in his thinking. But when the phrase the 'unity of opposites' is used to describe this aspect of Marx's method it is probably mistaken to take this to mean that the opposites are, or become, one. The term 'unity of opposites', when used with reference to Marx's method, might best be taken metaphorically to describe the way in which opposites go together or are inseparable. In Hegel's philosophy the poles of such opposing relationships such as positive and negative, and master and slave often seem to disappear in each other. That there is no positive without there also being a negative, as there is no master without a slave, is apparently re-interpreted to mean that the relationship 'dissolves itself'. The opposites, according to Hegel, merge at the last into each other. The positive and negative in his account of contradiction dissolve, for example, in their 'ground', just as appearance passes over into essence and the opposition between the two is apparently overcome.¹⁷

Marx rejects this interpretation of the 'unity' of opposites as, I think, his analysis of the circulation of commodities shows. Opposites for Marx remain opposites although they are united in their opposition. Similarly, he thinks it misleading to speak of appearance 'passing over' into essence once it is shown that the one accounts for the other. He disagrees also with Hegel in thinking the positive and negative sides of a contradiction do not disappear once the grounds of the contradiction are revealed.

Marx is, like Hegel, aware that the properties of physical things become apparent by excluding their opposites. Hegel sees this development merely as an intellectual process. But for Marx this dialectical insight represents more than the movement of concepts. For example, day is day because it is no longer dark, an apple is sweet because it is not sour, and a wage labourer is a wage labourer because s/he has insufficient capital to become a capitalist, but corresponding to these conceptual distinctions are palpable physical distinctions. What Hegel appears at times to overlook is that these are real and not just nominal exclusions. In his description of the human labour process in *Capital* Marx frequently tries to bring home his point through making a number of important contrasts. The notion of idleness provides a crucial background contrast to the discussion: idleness is a possibility permanently closed to the human species as a whole, but it is none the less open to some of its members through the control they have over the labour of others.

In contrast to idleness labour is first and foremost a natural necessity imposed on the human race. Like all other living creatures human beings have to wrest the means of their existence from nature. But the way in which human beings exploit nature is sharply distinguished from the survival activities of other species. Through being conscious, human productive activity marks itself off from the productive activities of other species. 'A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in the imagination before he erects it in reality.'¹⁸ With other species productive activity is instinctive; although the outcome may appear planned, the activity is never thought out in advance. Were it not possible to point to such a distinction between human

productive activity and animal productive activity Marx's analysis of the human labour process would break down. The dialectical contrast makes the analysis.

Marx's criticisms of the function of money in a capitalist economy also rest heavily on the concept of the unity of opposites. Money is, for Marx, the universal embodiment of the exchange-value of commodities which is through purchase and sale brought into contact with its particular embodiment, the single commodity. In exchange the concrete human labour realized in a commodity (measured in the number of hours spent on producing it) is equated with the abstract human labour (measured in socially necessary hours) required to produce the commodity. Actual labour time is weighed against socially necessary labour time. The institution of money under capitalism, therefore, permanently gives rise to the possibility that the number of hours actually spent on producing a good may not be adequately recompensed by the amount of the symbol of socially necessary hours exchanged for it. Furthermore, since all human labour only has value in social terms under capitalism when it can take on the form of abstract human labour, the possibility always exists that many objects produced by human labour may never realize a value. The housework carried out by spouses and parents is, for instance, productive human labour but it has no value in market terms. Its value can be measured only indirectly in terms of the costs of hiring an alternative. One other possible consequence of the separation of concrete human labour from value is that companies may market goods that no longer have value or whose value is greatly depreciated. This may happen because tastes have changed or because techniques of production have changed radically elsewhere. For the money system to work smoothly under capitalism the opposites of abstract human labour and concrete human labour have to be in accord – yet they never are. The necessity for the opposites to be united has, therefore, to be brought home forcibly to society through the general economic crisis.

Finally, we can remark that the notion of the unity of opposites enters into Marx's overall approach in a striking way. One of the alleged defects of bourgeois political economy is that it takes the market economy as the eternally existent and valid form of human production. Marx ridicules some of his contemporary

economists for taking capitalism back to the most primitive states of human society by describing bows, arrows, flints and other early weapons and implements as forms of capital. 'Such a primordial condition,' he says, 'explains nothing; it merely pushes the question into a grey nebulous distance. It assumes in the form of a fact, of an event, what the economist is supposed to deduce – namely, the necessary relationship between two things'. As a result of accepting such fallacies bourgeois political economists deprive themselves of the contrasts which allow capitalist production to be seen in a more revealing light. Marx suggests that 'theology in the same way explains the origin of evil by the fall of man; that is, it assumes as a fact, in historical form what has to be explained'.¹⁹ Instead of accepting and seeking to understand the present in all its many sidedness we are transposed to a primitive condition where there is no conflict and variety. Then the conflict is tautologically explained as arising from the loss of that original condition.

Marx's concept of a future communist society is intended to perform a different role. In serving as a 'counterfactual', opposite state of affairs Marx is helped in trying to bring out the specific, historical features of capitalist production. The concept of communism serves not only an ethical purpose as a goal at which humanity might aim but also a methodological purpose. For example, to those who are inclined to think of capitalism as the only possible form of production the category of wage labour fails to denote what might be taken to be its more disturbing aspects. Where all labour, past and present – in our own society and in other societies, is seen as wage labour nothing very distinctive can be said about wage labour. To see wage labour in its most complex and complete sense Marx thinks we have to imagine a condition which gives us the opposite of wage labour, namely, the combined production of free labourers.

Imagining the opposite state of affairs in order to explain the present does not though imply that the imagination should have entirely free rein. To perform its correct dialectical role the other state of affairs has most usefully to be the other of the present. This is where Marx thinks the distinction between his approach to socialism and that of the utopian socialists most clearly lies. Utopian socialists propose blueprints for the future which are, in his view, pure works of the imagination. They put forward ideas

of a system which suppose the present state of affairs has completely disappeared. They fail to see the historical continuity with the past which must underlie and shape any new society. As Marx and Engels put it in the *Communist Manifesto*, for Utopian socialists 'historical action is to yield to their personal inventive action, historically created conditions of emancipation to fantastic ones, and the gradual spontaneous class-organization of the proletariat to an organization of society specially contrived by these inventors.'²⁰

For example, the early Utopian socialist Robert Owen in calling for a more planned approach to manufacturing – whilst maintaining a free market economy – overlooked the incompatibility of production for profit with cooperative enterprise.²¹ The most revealing contrast with wage labour (labour which takes place only when the means of production owned by another are put at the disposal of the worker by another at an agreed hourly rate of pay) and the poverty and misery it causes is with labour controlled by the producers themselves using the means of production they themselves own and pay for from the proceeds of their own labour. Such planned collective labour holds out the best prospect for the advancement of human freedom. Thus the details of the ordering of a new socialist society emerge from the criticism of capitalism, just as a clearer understanding of capitalism emerges from the contrast with its polar opposite, socialism.

Real contradictions

A final distinctive feature of the dialectical method as advocated by Hegel and Marx is the recognition of the reality of contradiction in human experience. There are differences though, as I have tried to show, in how Marx and Hegel see this dialectical reality. Hegel subscribes to the view that contradiction is an ontological condition, namely, something inherent in things. This view is to some extent perpetuated in the Marxist tradition by Engels and Lenin. But I do not think this wholly reflects Marx's position. With Hegel, Engels and Lenin hold there is an absolute certainty about the contradictory nature of things. Marx on the whole avoids such statements about the necessity of contradiction. What Marx seems to stress is the fact that we as human subjects

often experience things in a contradictory way. Arguably, contradiction for Marx is a relationship between ourselves and the world and not something to be found in the world in itself. Following this view, for contradictions to be experienced requires a sensuous, feeling and knowing subject.

As reality – as understood by Marx – is humanly centred the contradictions we experience ought not sensibly to be regarded as having a basis in an abstract 'being as such'. Being is always social being for Marx. Thus, if we are to have an ontology it has only to be a social ontology. Contradictions arise in the course of our *apprehension* of the world. We communicate what we apprehend about the world most publicly in the form of statements and propositions. Therefore a contradiction can only be taken fully to exist through its linguistic expression. In stressing the role that contradiction plays in our experience he has in mind the contradictions which often unavoidably arise among the propositions we make about the world. It is human relations that give rise to contradictions and they are typically expressed in our communicative process. A being that does not relate to other human beings and does not communicate, experiences no contradictions. My understanding is – and it appears also to be Marx's – that in the realm of human communicative experience there seems to be no predetermined harmony. In our observation of the world and in reporting it to others contradictions seem always to arise. No two people appear to experience the same thing in precisely the same way.

Those who argue therefore that there can be no contradictions in things are in the strict sense correct. The experience we document and report is not made up of things, it consists of propositions. There is, none the less, an element of truth in what those who wish to ontologize (make it into an objective thing) dialectic claim. There may, indeed, not be contradictions in things, but there seem certainly to be contradictions in our experience of things. It is on conveying these contradictions that Hegel and Marx concentrate their attention. For Hegel the experience of life itself is contradictory. 'Pain is,' he says, 'the prerogative of living natures; . . . they are an actuality of infinite power such that they are within themselves the negativity of themselves, that this negativity is for them, and that they maintain themselves in their otherness. It is said that contradiction is unthinkable; but the fact

is that in the pain of a living being it is even an actual existence.'²² For Marx human experience is similarly dominated by need. Human beings are not self-sufficient – they require frequently to bend to the demands of nature to attain their ends. The human individual is both independent of nature and dependent on it. The labour process, Marx says in *Capital*, 'is the necessary condition for effecting exchange of matter between man and nature; it is the everlasting nature imposed condition of human existence.'²³ We experience the labour process, therefore, in an unavoidably painful and contradictory way. Labour both limits and makes possible our freedom. In the activity of labour we have to concentrate our energies on a fixed purpose for a prolonged period of time. This requires both effort and an element of self-denial. Simultaneously labour is both fulfilling and very demanding. Present joys are set to one side for future gains. Although as the tools and machinery at our disposal improve and the work we have to perform becomes lighter and less physically exhausting, the contradictory and painful aspect of human labour is unlikely fully to disappear in the future. Labour is both a curse on mankind and its saving grace. Labour civilizes us by temporarily denying us the fruits of civilization.

In bringing out such contradictions Marx thinks we are led to a fuller understanding of ourselves and our world. To attempt to depict the world in such a way that it makes it devoid of such tensions is to give a flat, lifeless, and, above all, misleading view of its nature. Marx clashes most often on this account with the political economists. Since they appear, on the whole, committed to the economic system they are trying to describe they often gloss over in what they report a number of the system's apparent difficulties. In the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* Marx criticizes political economy for not recognizing 'the unoccupied worker, the working man, in so far as he happens to be outside this labour relationship. The cheat-thief, swindler beggar, and unemployed; the starving, wretched and criminal working man – these are figures who do not exist for political economy but only for other eyes, those of the doctor, the judge, the gravedigger and bumbailiff etc., such figures are spectres outside its domain.'²⁴ Within the framework of political economy the sole matter of concern appears to be the role of the worker as a factor of production. In order to show the highest return on their

investment capitalists are, quite naturally, interested in hiring their workers at the lowest possible cost. Political economy mirrors this concern. Marx suggests that political economists might also pursue the labourer's fate in social and private life outside the factory gates instead of confining their attention to the labourer's wage rate. Political economists tend to examine carefully what determines this rate of wages without at the same time giving a passing thought to what this wage rate implies for the individual worker. On Marx's reading the standard of life of the majority of the population seems for political economists to be a matter which falls outside their subject.

In contrast Marx in *Capital* attempts to follow through dialectically the effects of the capitalist process of production on individual workers. In an extensive section on the topic of unemployment he looks at the various categories of what he calls the 'relative surplus population' or 'industrial reserve army'.²⁵ To this day, the generally accepted manner of treating the topic of unemployment in economics is to regard it as a factor extraneous to the workings of the economy in its normal condition arising only when the system is in disequilibrium. According to this view when a capitalist economy is working at its natural level there can be no unemployment. As a consequence many economists attribute what unemployment occurs to what they call 'structural constraints' and often a favourite concern of today's monetarist economists is the seemingly excessive power of trades unions. Marx, however, would present this as an example of bourgeois economists attempting to gloss over the unavoidably contradictory nature of the capitalist economy. Seen from his dialectical perspective the capitalist economy is unlikely ever to attain 'equilibrium'. Disequilibrium is a feature of economic life. The contradictions capitalism displays are real and not imaginary. Contrary to what the monetarist economists claim, the natural condition of the capitalist economy is one in which the spectre of mass unemployment is never far away.

One point which flows from Marx's contradictory view of our experience should not, however, be overlooked. To resolve a contradiction in practice – such as the contradiction of unemployment – does not imply that all contradictions in our experience are resolved. Alterations which resolve one contradiction may, in all likelihood, give rise to others. Therefore a socialist society would not, for Marx, be seen as one which is free from contradiction. On

the contrary, it should be a society in which contradictions are openly recognized, understood and, in so far as is humanly possible, resolved. Given that we are natural individuals there are some contradictions in our experience that can never fully be resolved. Human individuals will always be mortal, always be subject to disease, always have more desires than they can possibly fulfil and will always suffer from limitations in their knowledge. A dialectical view of experience (which is one way of thinking about life, and not life itself) helps us see the contradictory nature of our ways of thinking about the world but it does not fully do away with this contradictory nature. As Marx puts it, 'because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, therefore according to its transient side, because it lets nothing impose on it, it is in its essence critical and revolutionary'.²⁶

Notes

1. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1972, p. 5; *Negative Dialektik*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, p. 15.
2. Ibid.
3. 'Marx's originality lies in the fact that, in opposition to Hegel, he demonstrates that history is in development, that *being is irreducible to knowledge*.' J.-P. Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, New Left Books, London, p. 23.
4. *Capital*, p. 597; *Das Kapital*, p. 623.
5. *Marx's Social Ontology*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1978. My understanding of Marx's social ontology differs from that of Gould because Gould regards the 'fundamental entities that compose the world' as 'individuals in social relations' (p1) whereas I take Marx's view to be that those fundamental entities are in fact commodities. Since commodities are social relations which are also things this analysis and Gould's are not as far apart as first appears. Marx's view seems to be that knowledge of human individuality emerges through our knowledge of the commodity form and the market economy. Gould appears to follow the reverse path of regarding individuality as presently embedded in the commodity form. My view I take to be nearer to that of Lukacs who sees Marx as making 'the production and reproduction of human life into his central problem'. (*Zur Ontologie des gesellschaftlichen Seins*, Luchterhand Neuwied, 1977, p. 10). But the line of demarcation which Lukacs draws between philosophy and science is confusing (p. 19). This leads Lukacs to the conclusion that Marx's arguments in *Capital* are informed by philosophy rather than being in the strict sense

philosophical. But this leads back to the idea that philosophy is above practice – an idea that Marx specifically rejects. For an excellent discussion of *Capital* as a philosophical work see also F. Vosskuhler, *Negative Dialektik als Problem*, doctoral dissertation, Mainz University, 1979.

6. J. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Heinemann, London, 1972, p. 317; 'The truth of statements is linked in the last analysis to the intention of the good and true life.'
7. *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 11; *Werke* 3, p. 24.
8. K. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1961, p. 17; p. 76.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
10. Cf. Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, p. 48: 'And knowledge, itself totalizing, is the totalization itself in so far as it is present in particular partial structures of a definite kind.'
11. 'The moments of a totality . . . can be known and understood only if we know the relation of each to all the rest, and it is this systematic structure of relations which constitutes the totality'. R. Norman, 'On the Hegelian Dialectic', in R. Norman and S. Sayers, *Hegel, Marx and Dialectic*, Harvester, Brighton, 1980, p. 33.
12. This view is distinct from that advanced by S. Sayers in *Reason and Reality*, (Blackwell, Oxford, 1985, p. 32) that 'appearance and reality are opposites which exist in unity.' This view can be easily confused with the suggestion that appearance and reality are one (i.e., the same). This is a view that suits Hegel's idealist purposes, but it is not one shared by Marx.
13. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B350/A293-B355/A298; *Werke* 3, p. 111.
14. 'Law is not beyond appearance but is immediately present in it; the realm of laws is the stable image of the world of existence or appearance.' *Science of Logic*, p. 503; *Werke* 6, pp. 153-4.
15. *Science of Logic*, p. 393; *Werke* 5, p. 18.
16. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, Lawrence & Wishart, London, p. 223.
17. 'The truth of appearance is the essential relation.' *Science of Logic*, p. 513; *Werke* 6, p. 164.
18. *Capital*, p. 178; *Das Kapital*, p. 193.
19. *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, p. 121; *Werke Ergänzungsband* 1, p. 511.
20. Marx and Engels, *Selected Works in One Volume*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1967, p. 60.
21. R. Owen *A New View of Society*, Dent, London, 1977, pp. 86-7.
22. *Science of Logic*, p. 770; *Werke* 6, p. 481.
23. *Capital*, p. 184; *Das Kapital*, p. 198.
24. *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, p. 121; *Werke Ergänzungsband* 1, pp. 523-4.
25. *Capital*, ch. xxv, secs 2 & 3.
26. *Capital*, p. 20; *Das Kapital*, p. 25.



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